
Australia's Annual Overdose Report 2025



Key insights



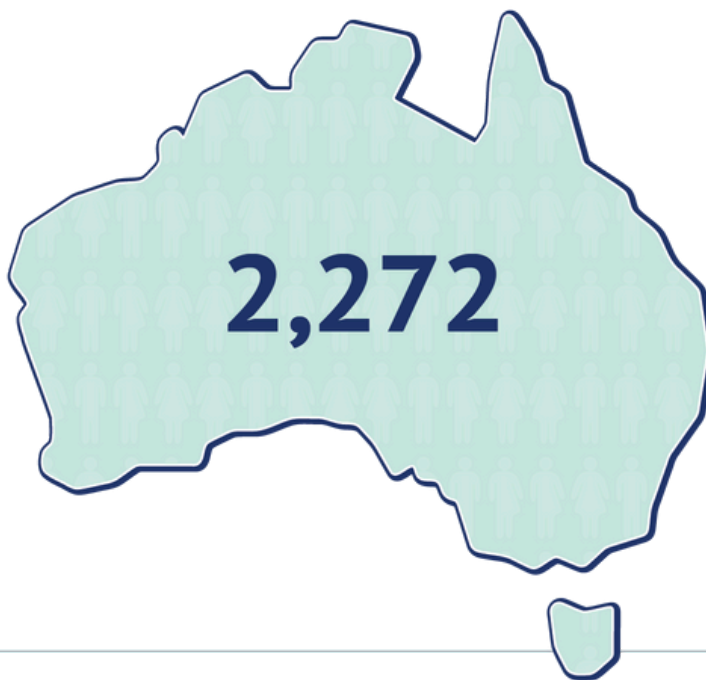
PENINGTON
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Overdose remains a national crisis, claiming the lives of over 6 Australians every day. The overdose toll is unacceptably high and the urgency for action remains as strong as ever.

- There were 2,272 overdose deaths in 2023, equivalent to over 6 people per day.
- In 2023, overdose deaths accounted for almost 70,000 (66,636) years of potential life lost, 31 years per person.
- This is the tenth year running that over 2,000 overdose deaths have been recorded.
- The annual number of overdose deaths has almost doubled between 2001 and 2023.

Number of overdose deaths in Australia in 2023



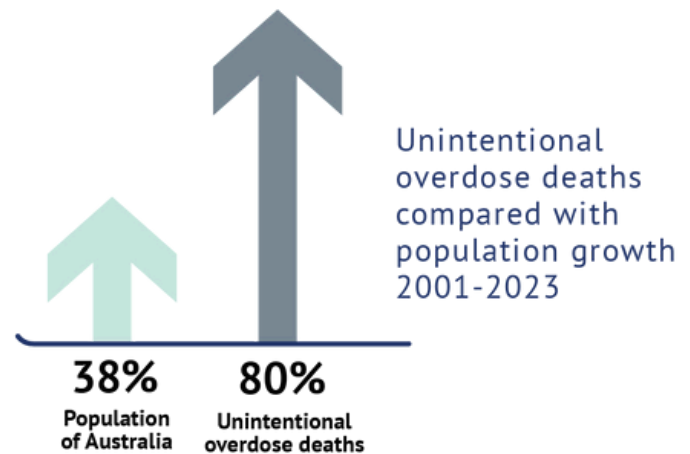
Unintentional
overdose deaths:

78% or
1,768 deaths

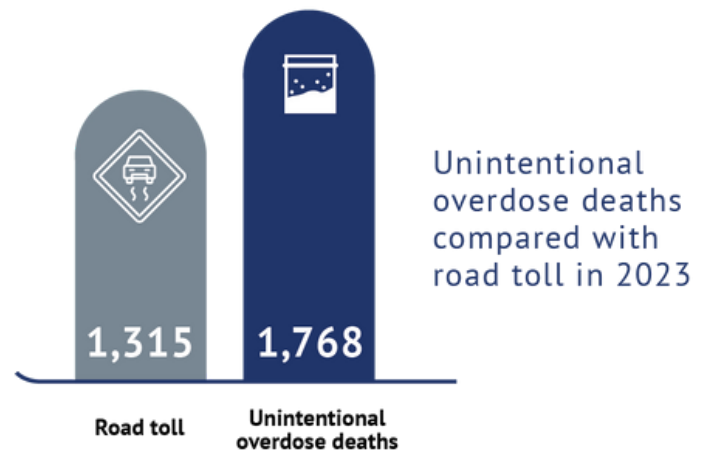
SINCE 2001

42,526 overdose deaths
in Australia

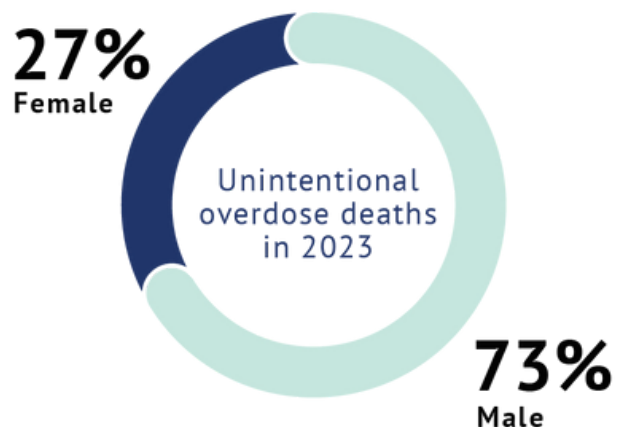
01 | The increase in the number of unintentional overdose deaths far surpasses population growth. Since 2001 the national population of Australia has increased by 38% while the number of unintentional overdose deaths has grown by 80%.



02 | Overdose deaths continue to outpace the national road toll. In 2008, the number of overdose deaths in Australia surpassed the number of deaths from road traffic accidents. The gap has since grown.



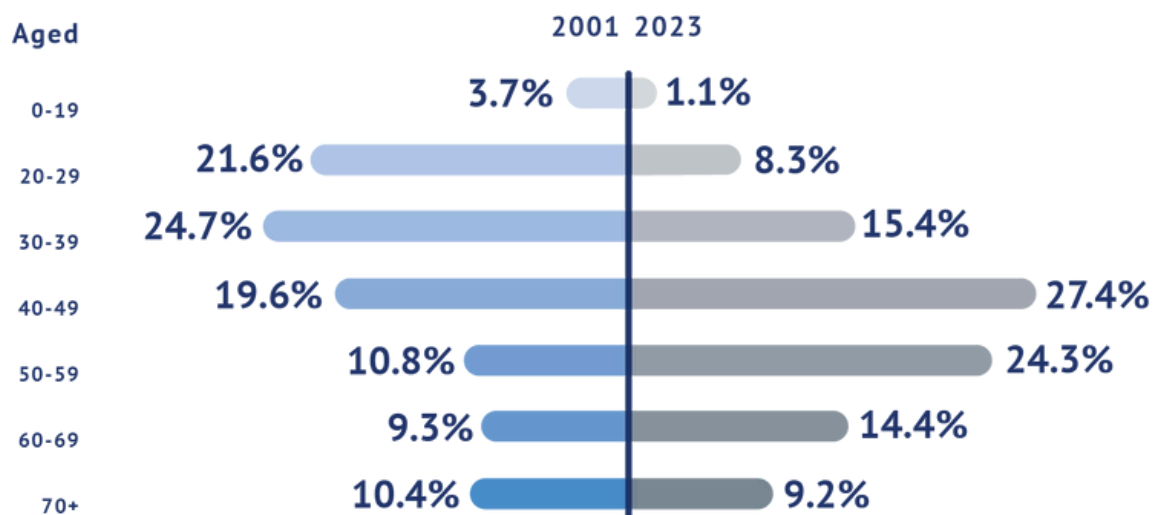
03 | Males accounted for three-quarters of unintentional overdose deaths in 2023. Overdose deaths were the second-leading cause of death in the 30-39 age group for both males and females, and were the third leading cause for both groups among people aged 20-29.



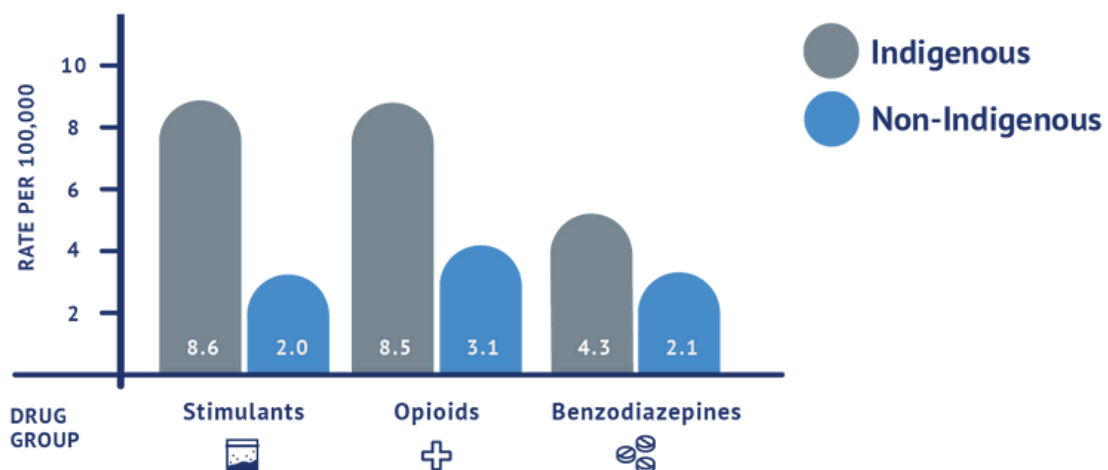
04 | Overdose deaths impact people across all age groups, and increasingly older people.

- Since 2001, the greatest increase in unintentional overdose deaths has been observed in those aged 50-59 - an increase of 305%.
- Deaths among those aged 60-69 have nearly tripled - an increase of 179%.
- In contrast, deaths among people aged 29 and below decreased over time by 34% (from 248 in 2001 to 165 in 2023).

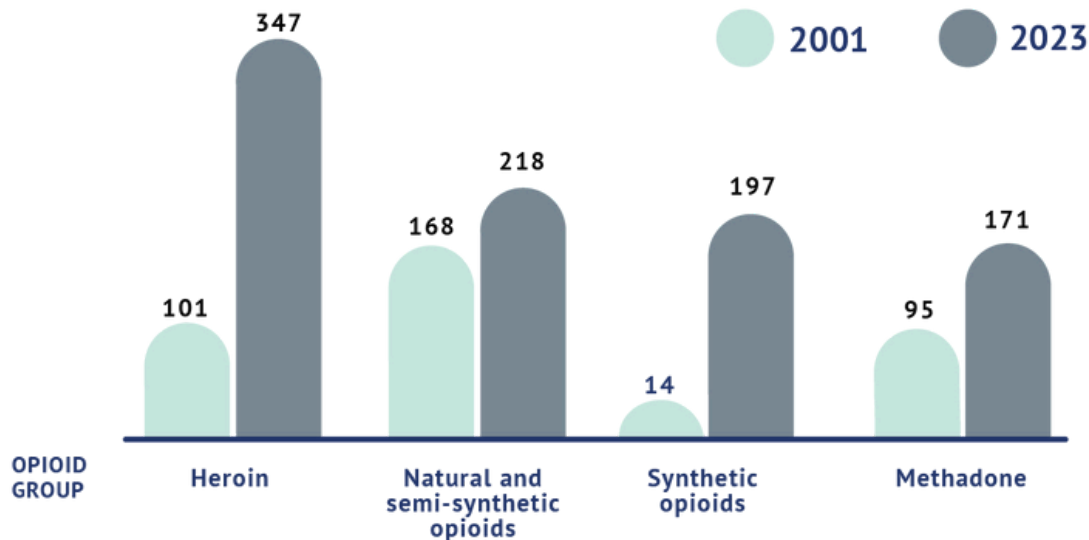
Percent of unintentional overdose deaths by age group, 2001 and 2023



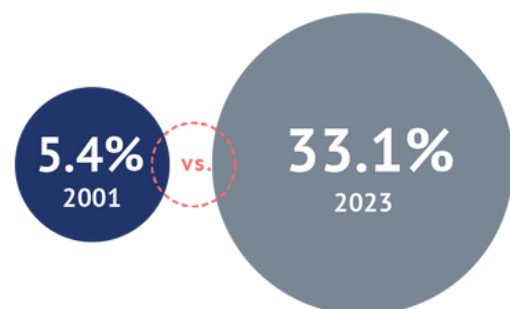
05 | The overdose death rate remains alarmingly high among Indigenous people compared with non-Indigenous Australians. For Indigenous people, the rate of unintentional overdose deaths is more than 3.5 times that of non-Indigenous people: 22.5 per 100,000 compared with 5.7 per 100,000 non-Indigenous people.



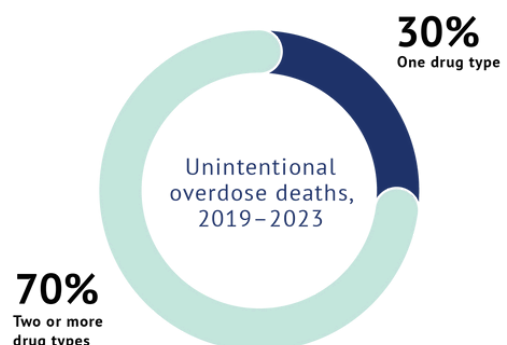
06 | Heroin continues to be the opioid type most commonly involved in unintentional overdose deaths. However, synthetic opioids are now involved nearly as often as natural and semi-synthetic opioids, a significant change since the 2010s.



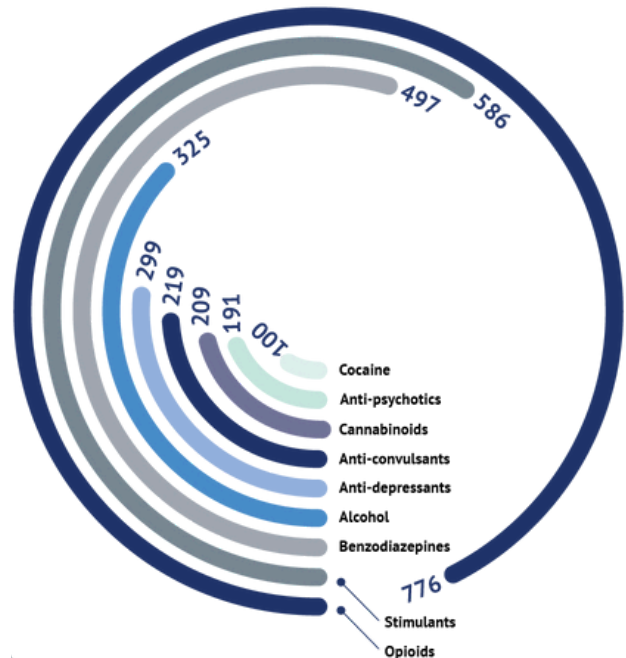
07 | Stimulants replaced benzodiazepines as the second-most common drug type involved in unintentional overdose deaths, increasing significantly between 2001 and 2023. The majority of stimulant-related deaths also involve other substances.



08 | Most unintentional overdose deaths involve more than one drug. The drug types most commonly involved in poly-substance deaths during the 5 years from 2019 to 2023 were opioids (involved in 79.5% of such deaths), benzodiazepines (63%), anti-depressants (36.9%), stimulants (36.9%) and alcohol (24.4%).



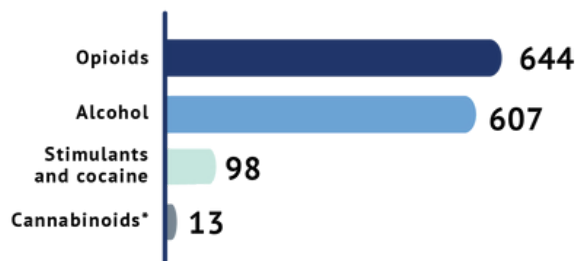
09 | Opioids continue to be the most common drug type associated with unintentional overdose deaths in 2023, contributing to nearly half of these deaths in Australia.



10 | Apart from opioids, alcohol was involved in the highest number of overdose deaths involving a single drug between 2019 and 2023.

Relative to prevalence of use (2.5 million Australians in 2022-23) cannabinoids are rarely involved in single-drug overdose deaths.

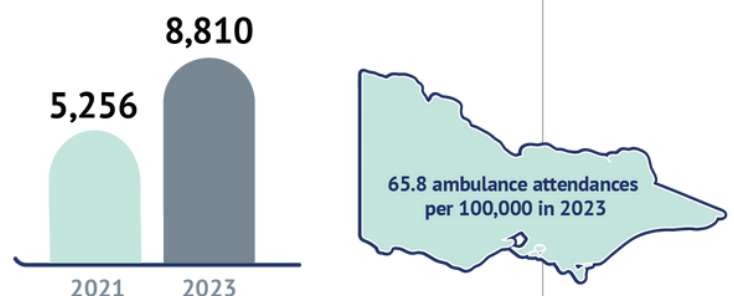
Number of single-drug overdose deaths by drug type from 2019-2023



*The term 'cannabinoids' includes both synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists (SCRAs) and phyto-cannabinoids (eg THC).

11 | Ambulance attendances involving suspected GHB use rose sharply between 2021 and 2023, highlighting an emerging area of concern. Victoria had the highest rate of GHB-related ambulance attendance in 2023: 65.8 attendances per 100,000, almost double the 35.7 per 100,000 registered in 2021.

Ambulance attendances involving suspected GHB, 2021 and 2023



**Please note this is a snapshot of key insights from
Australia's Annual Overdose Report 2025.**

See the full report for more detail at:
penington.org.au