



Australian Bureau of Statistics, Causes of Death, 2023

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
communities suicide data summary**

Released 10 October 2024

Acknowledgements

Everymind acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise the continuing culture, strength and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, and their ongoing connection to the land, skies and waterways.

We also acknowledge the ongoing impact of colonisation, discrimination and inequities that contribute to significant health disparities, particularly the disproportionate rates of suicide.

- When exploring suicide data, it is important to remember that behind the numbers are individuals, families and communities impacted by suicide in Australia. By combining the knowledge in this data with other Australian data sets and the wisdom of those with lived and living experience, we will increase opportunities to reduce suicide and its impacts.
- It is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and services speak to this data. We recommend that you contact the Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention for advice and guidance on interpretation and communication about this data: cbpatsisp.com.au/contact-us/



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About this summary

- This summary was prepared by Everymind using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death data, released 10 October 2024. The data summary was used to support the Everymind team in the *Mindframe* briefing for media and sector and further dissemination of the data through *Life in Mind*.
- Media and others communicating publicly about this data are reminded to be responsible and accurate. Resources to support reporting and other communication are available at mindframe.org.au/suicide. [Media guidelines on the reporting of First Nations issues in Australia](#) and a [First Nations guide for truth-telling about suicide](#) are also available.

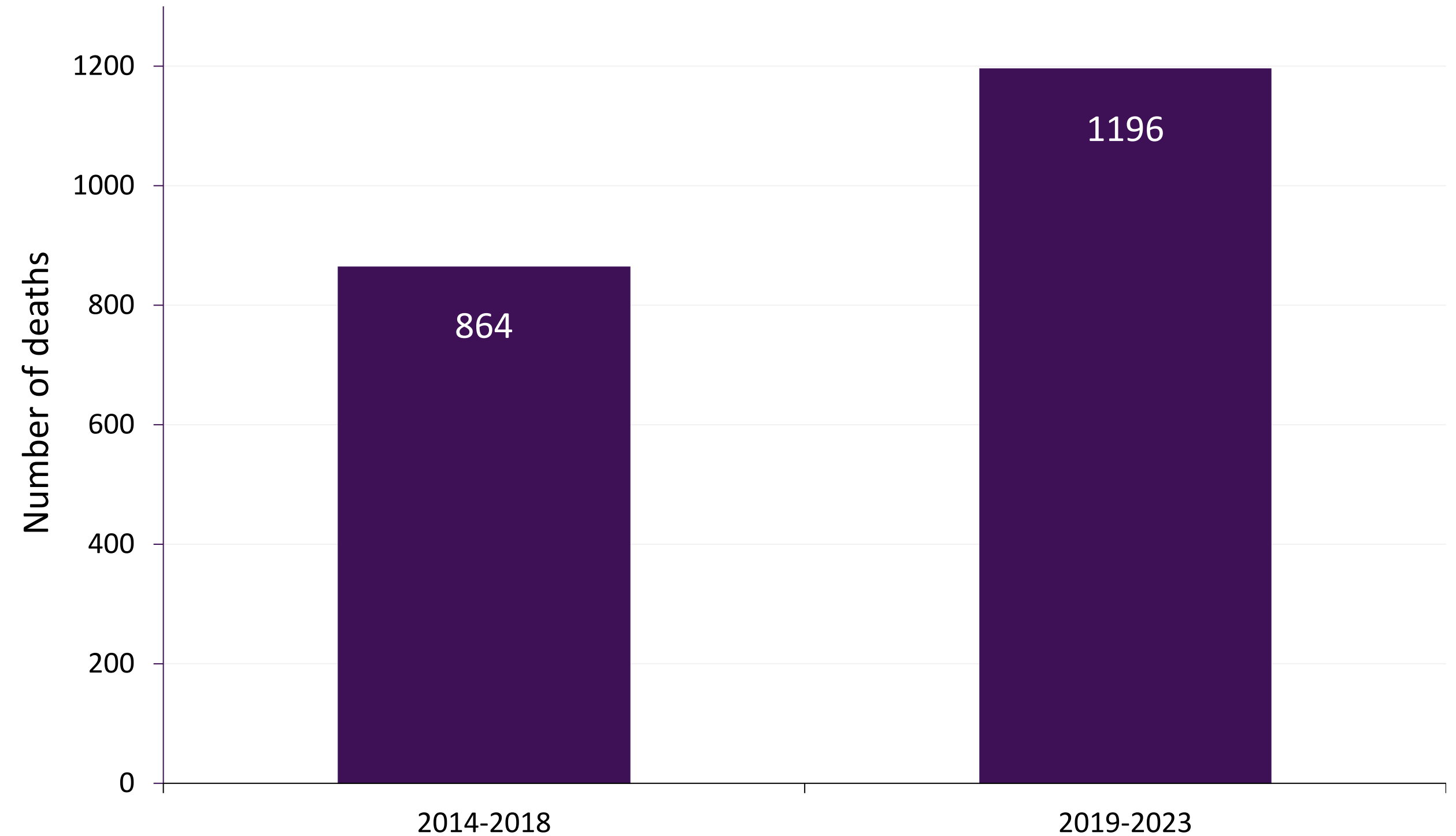
Notes about using statistics

- Since 2015, the ABS has improved the process for identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths across several jurisdictions. This has resulted in more deaths among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being identified. Therefore, trends over time need to be interpreted with caution. This improved process has also allowed the reporting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicides in Victoria for the first time in this release.
- Some data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can only be compiled from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Most data in this summary is presented for these states only.
- From 2013 onwards, data is presented by the year the death was registered, rather than the reference year.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: All of Australia

- In 2023, **275** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide. This is an increase from the 243 deaths recorded in 2022.
- The median age of death in 2023 was **33 years**.
- Over 30% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who died by suicide lived in New South Wales.
- When comparing 2014-2018 to 2019-2023, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide deaths increased across all jurisdictions, except for Western Australia.



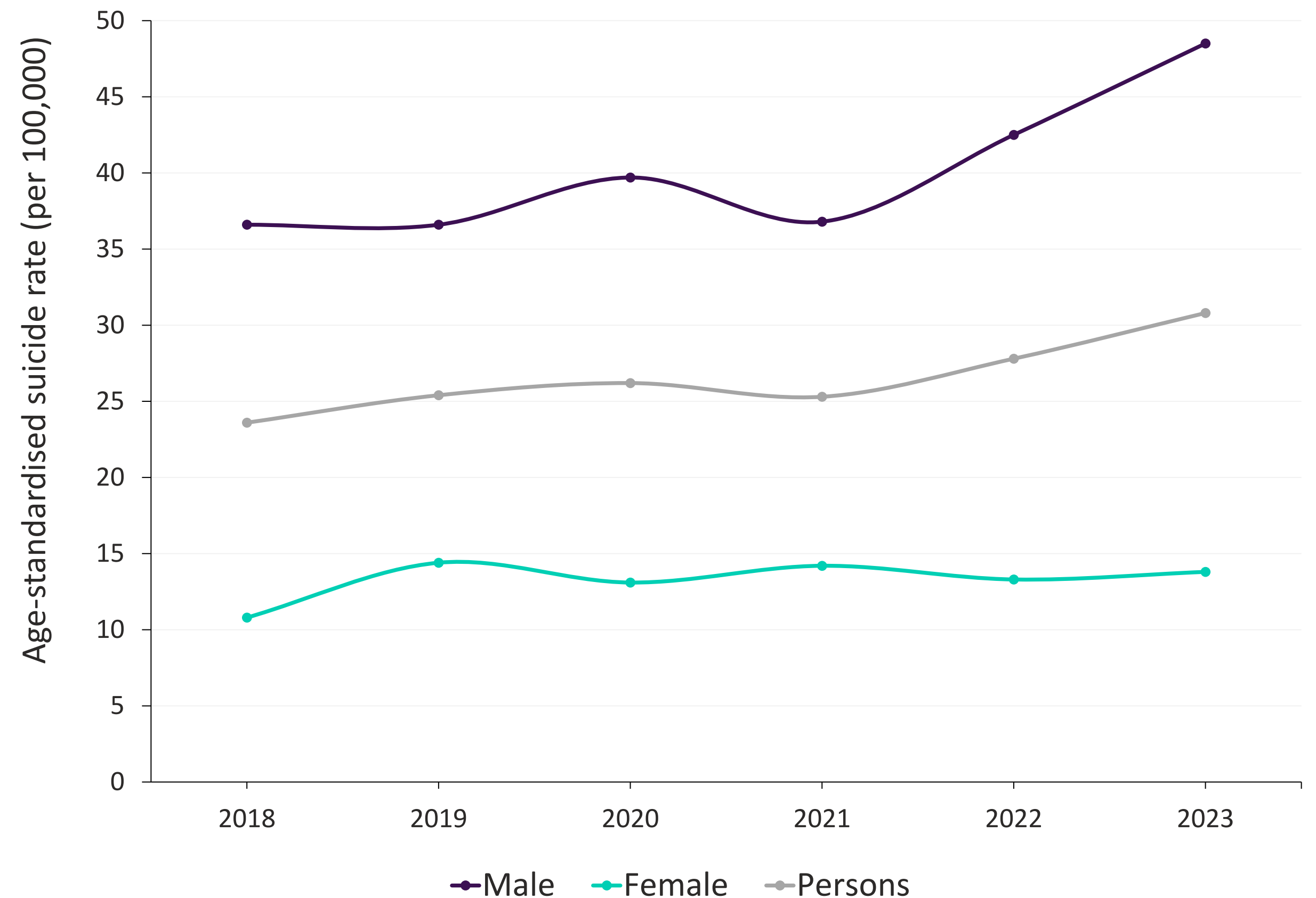
Note: Due to changes in identifying Indigenous status, care should be taken when making comparisons over time.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Selected states

The following data is from **six** jurisdictions: New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

- Suicide was the **fifth leading cause of death** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has increased between 2018 and 2023 by **30.5%**.
- The biggest increases occurred in 2022 and 2023, which corresponds with the methodology change in deriving Indigenous status.
- In 2023, the suicide rate is the highest in the time series at **30.8 per 100,000**.



Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA. Due to changes in identifying Indigenous status, care should be taken when making comparisons over time.

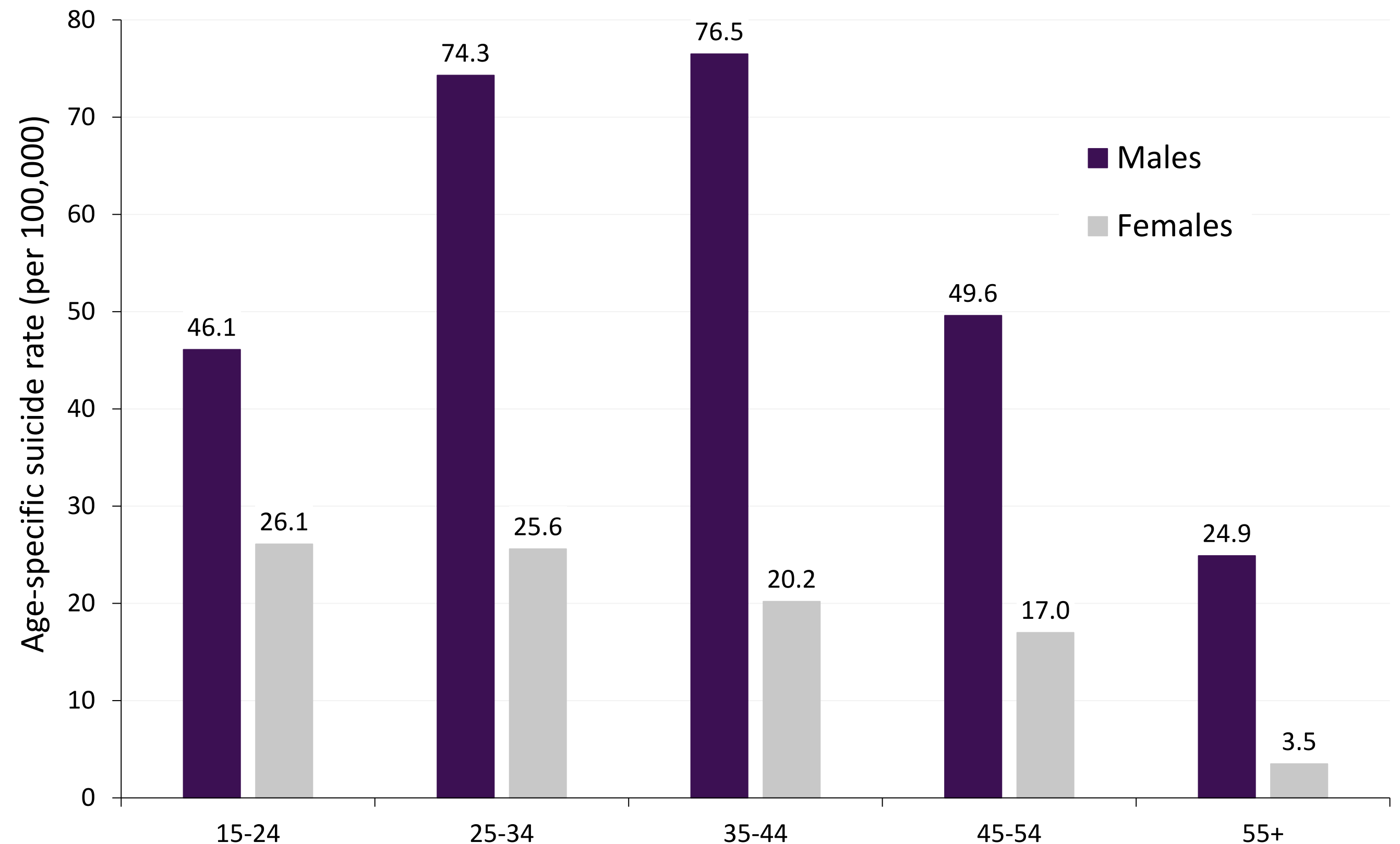


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Age-specific rates

The following data is from **six** jurisdictions: New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who died by suicide between 2019-2023:

- **80%** were aged between 15 and 44 years.
- For males, the highest suicide rate was for those aged 35-44 years at **76.5 deaths per 100,000**.
- For females, the highest rate was for those aged 15-24 years at **26.1 deaths per 100,000**.



Note: Age-specific suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.

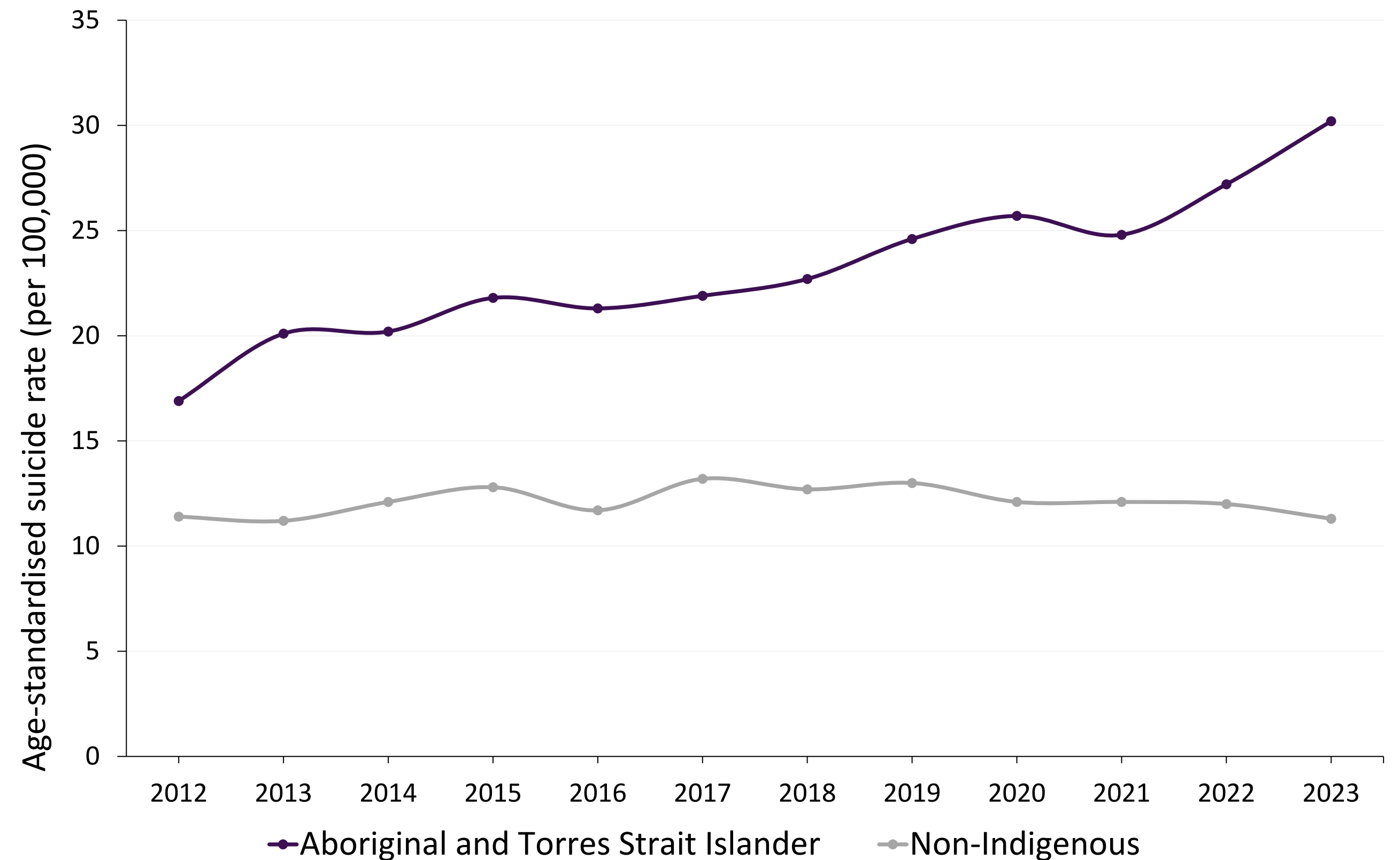
Due to changes in identifying Indigenous status, care should be taken when making comparisons over time.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared to non-Indigenous people

The following data is from **five** jurisdictions: New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

- Since 2020, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a suicide rate more than double that of non-Indigenous people.
- In 2023, the age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was **30.2 per 100,000** compared to 11.3 for non-Indigenous people.



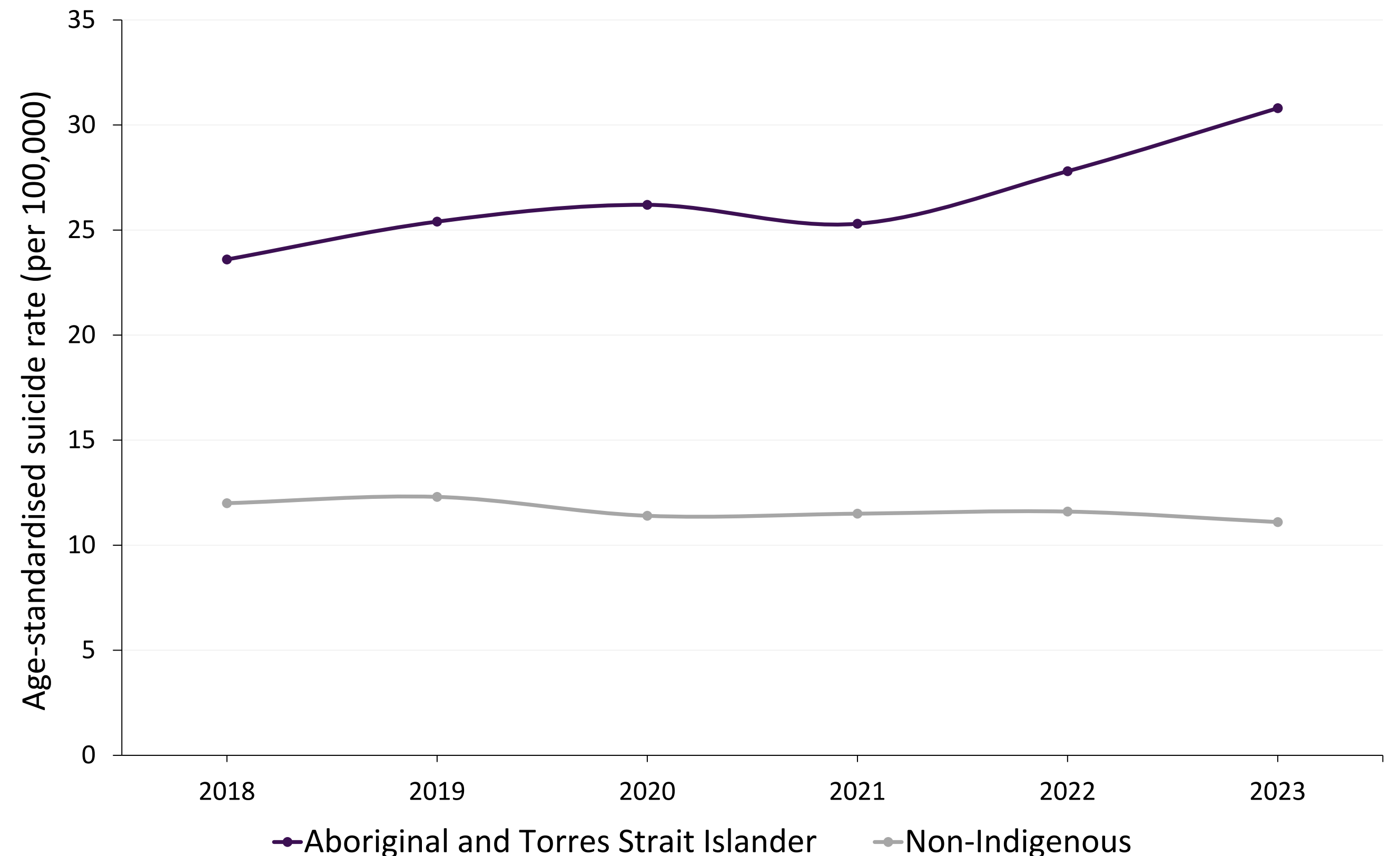
Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA and WA. Due to changes in identifying Indigenous status, care should be taken when making comparisons over time.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people compared to non-Indigenous people

The following data is from **six** jurisdictions: New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

- Since 2019, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a suicide rate more than double that of non-Indigenous people.
- In 2023, the age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was **30.8 per 100,000** compared to 11.1 for non-Indigenous people.
- When changing from five to six jurisdictions, there was a slight increase in the rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with a decrease for non-Indigenous people.



Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA. Due to changes in identifying Indigenous status, care should be taken when making comparisons over time.

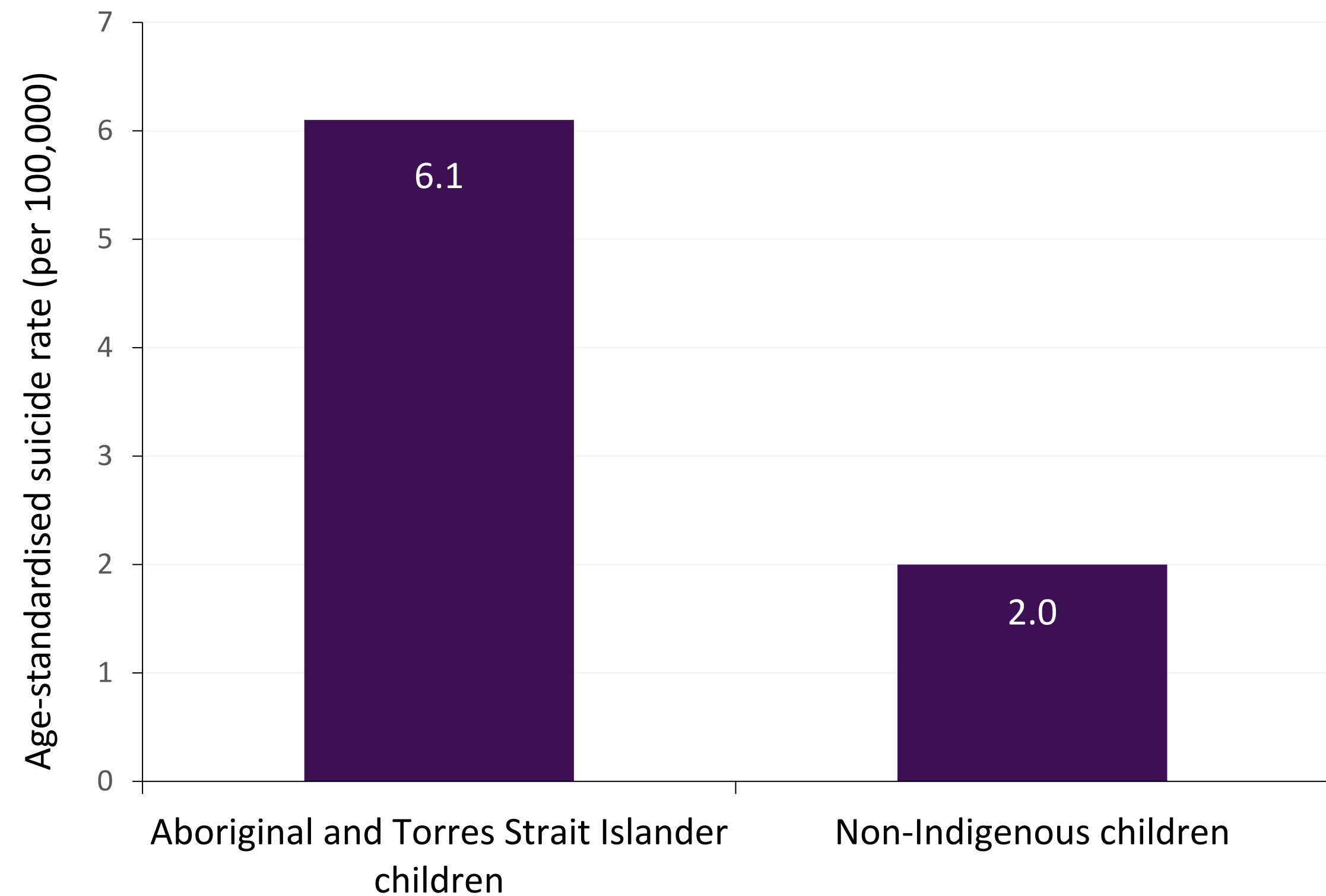


Suicide in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (5-17 years)

Deaths of children by suicide is an extremely sensitive issue and care is required when viewing and reporting on this data.

During the period 2019-2023:

- **81** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged between 5-17 years died by suicide.
- Suicide was the leading cause of death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children had a higher age-specific suicide rate (**6.1 per 100,000**) compared to non-Indigenous children (2.0 per 100,000).
- Over half (**55.6%**) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who died by suicide were female.



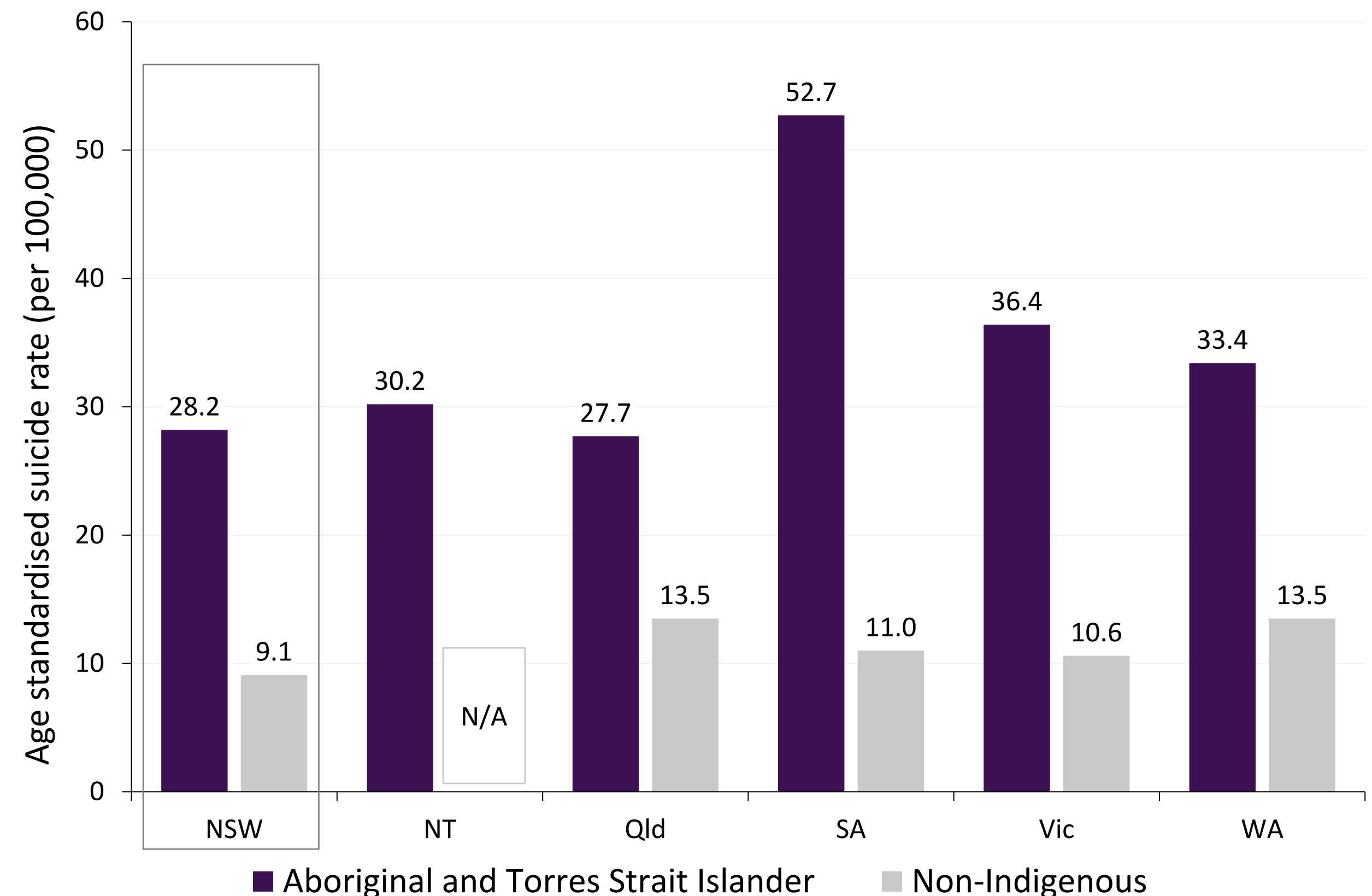
New South Wales suicide data 2023



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: New South Wales

New South Wales in 2023

- In New South Wales, **85 (67 male, 18 female)** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- Suicide was the **fourth leading cause of death** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in New South Wales compared to the 20th leading cause of death for non-Indigenous people.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**28.2 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised suicide rate for New South Wales (9.1 per 100,000).



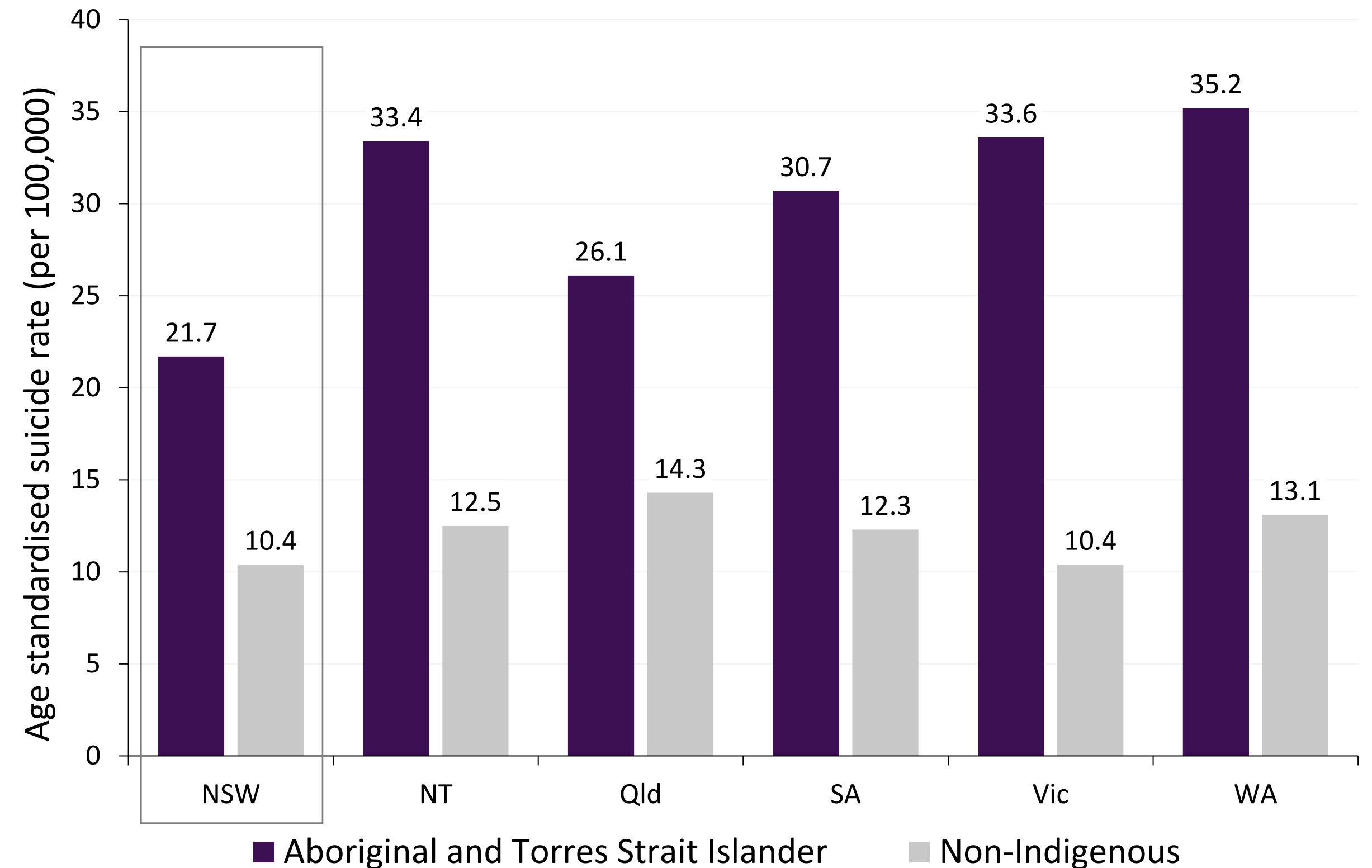
Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: New South Wales

New South Wales 2019-2023

- Across a five-year period, **314** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**21.7 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised suicide rate (**10.4 per 100,000**).



Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



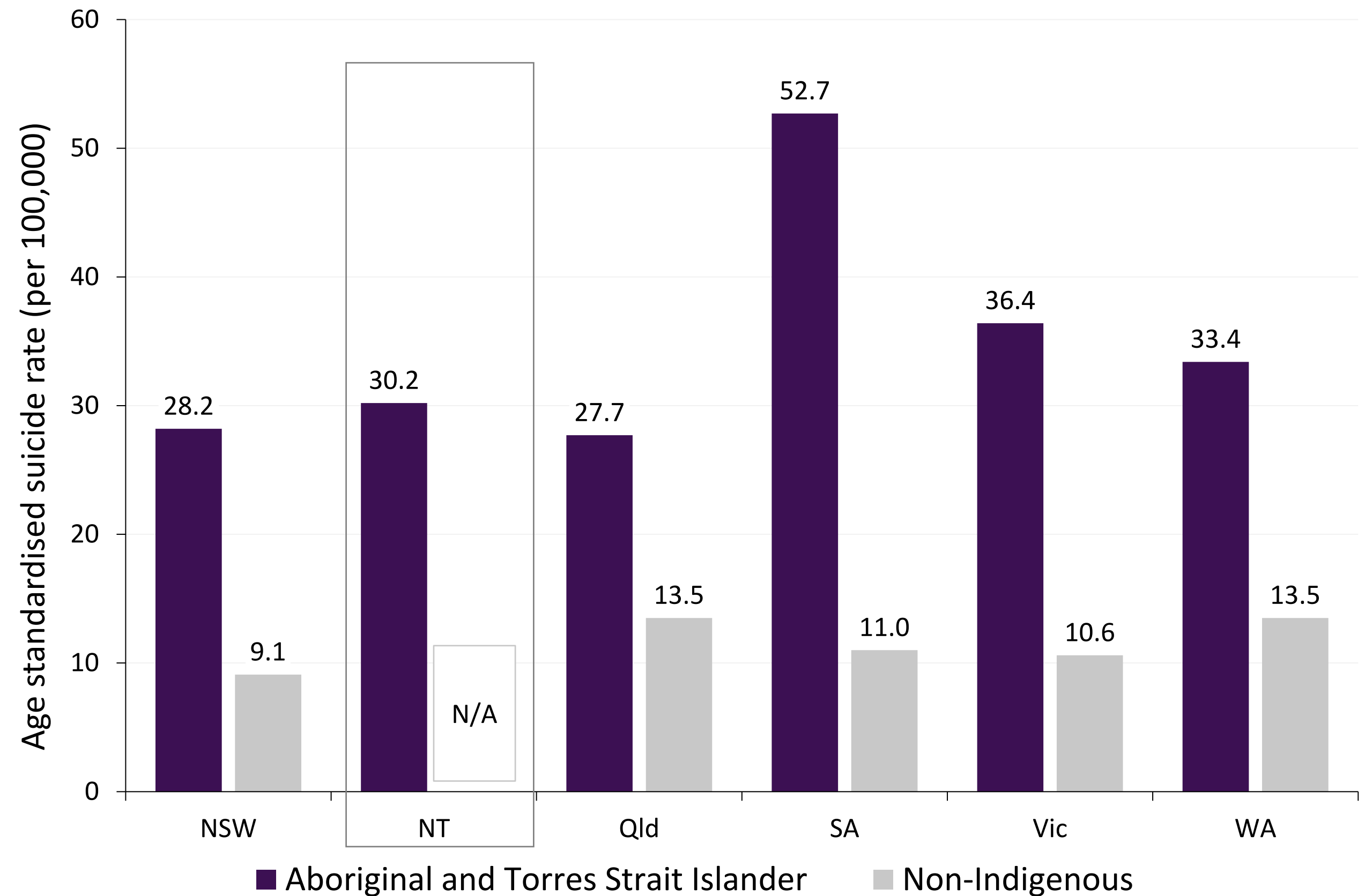
Northern Territory suicide data 2023



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Northern Territory

Northern Territory in 2023

- In the Northern Territory, **25** (**16** males, **9** females) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- Suicide was the **fourth leading cause of death** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory, compared to the ninth leading cause of death for non-Indigenous people.
- The age-standardised death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was **30.3 per 100,000**. The age-standardised rate for non-Indigenous Australians is not available for publication.



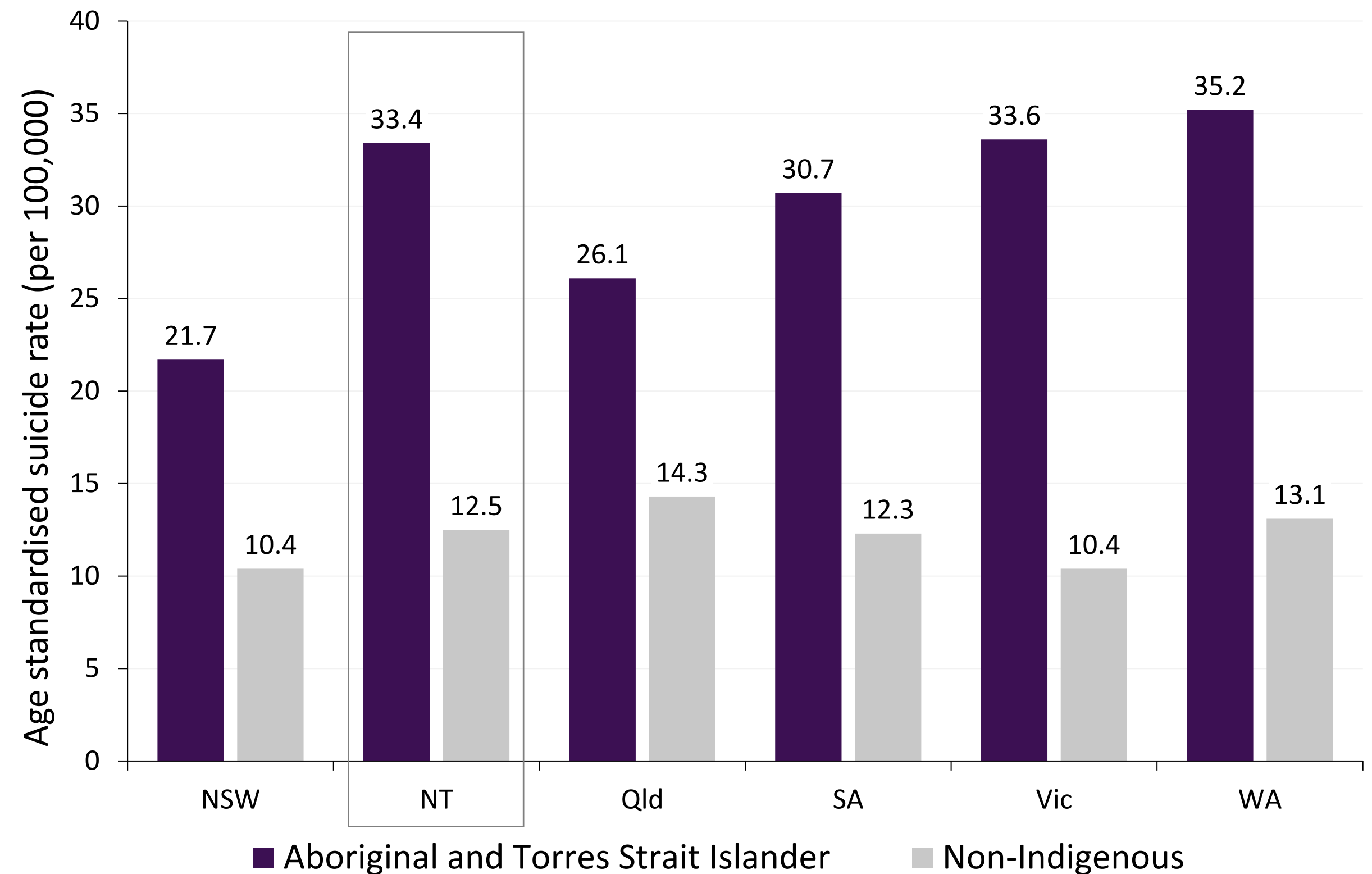
Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Northern Territory

Northern Territory 2019-2023

- Across a five-year period, **135** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**33.4 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised suicide rate (**12.5 per 100,000**).



Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



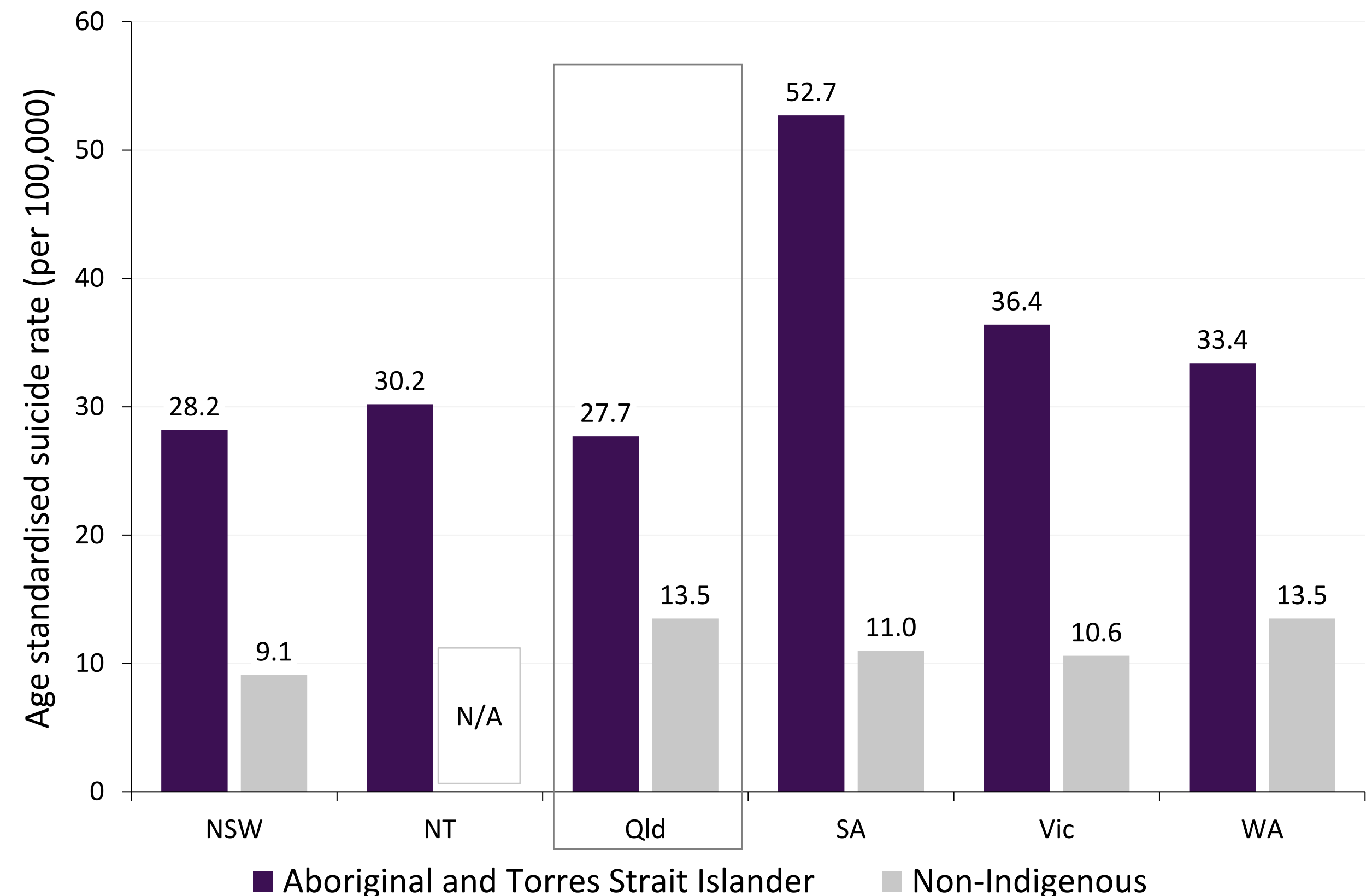
Queensland suicide data 2023



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Queensland

Queensland in 2023

- In Queensland, **69 (48 male, 21 female)** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- Suicide was the **fifth leading cause of death** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland, compared to the 12th leading cause of death for non-Indigenous people.
- The age-standardised death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**27.7 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised death rate (13.5 per 100,000).



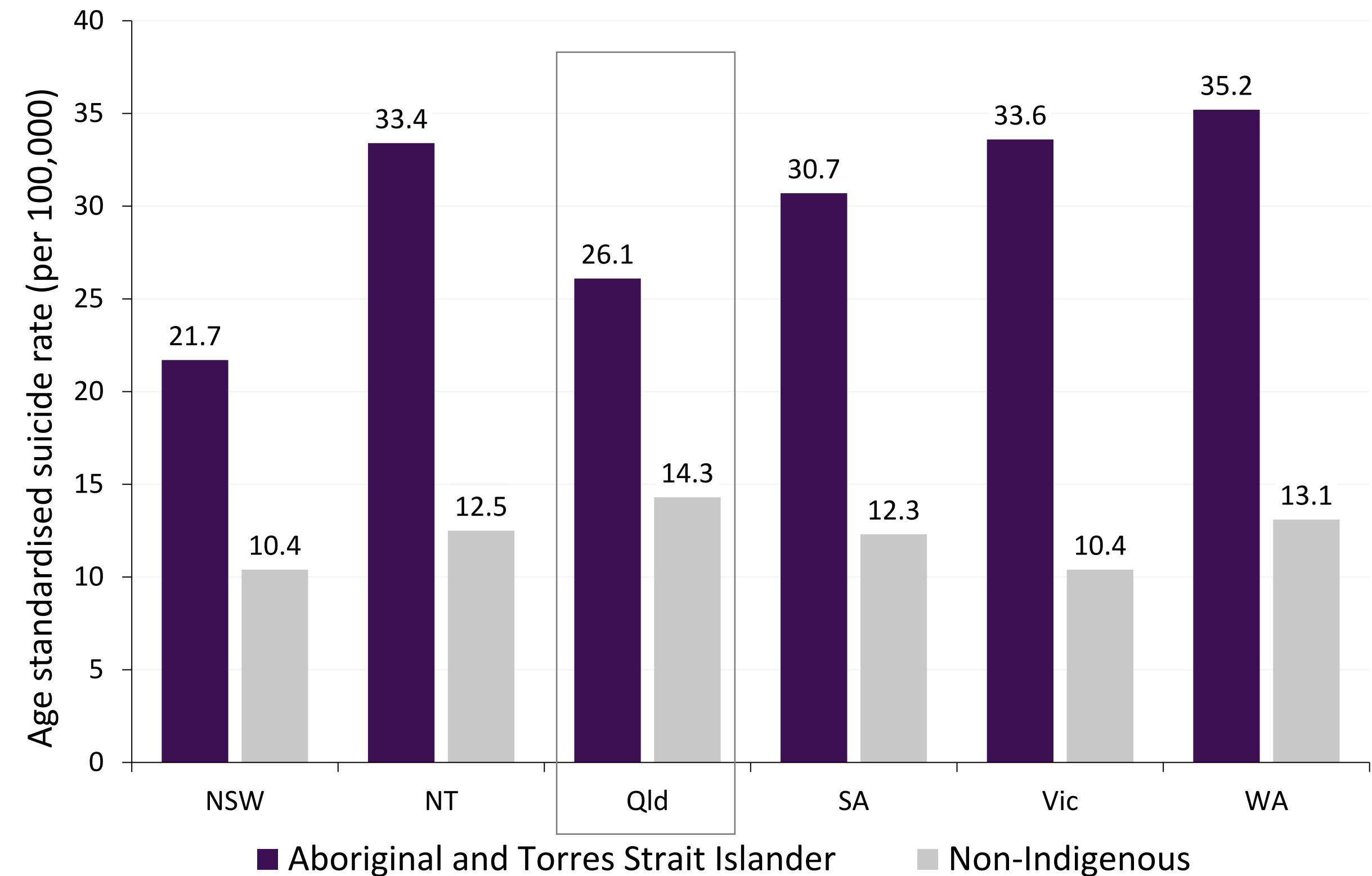
Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Queensland

Queensland 2019-2023

- Across a five-year period, **329** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**26.1 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised suicide rate (**14.3 per 100,000**).



Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



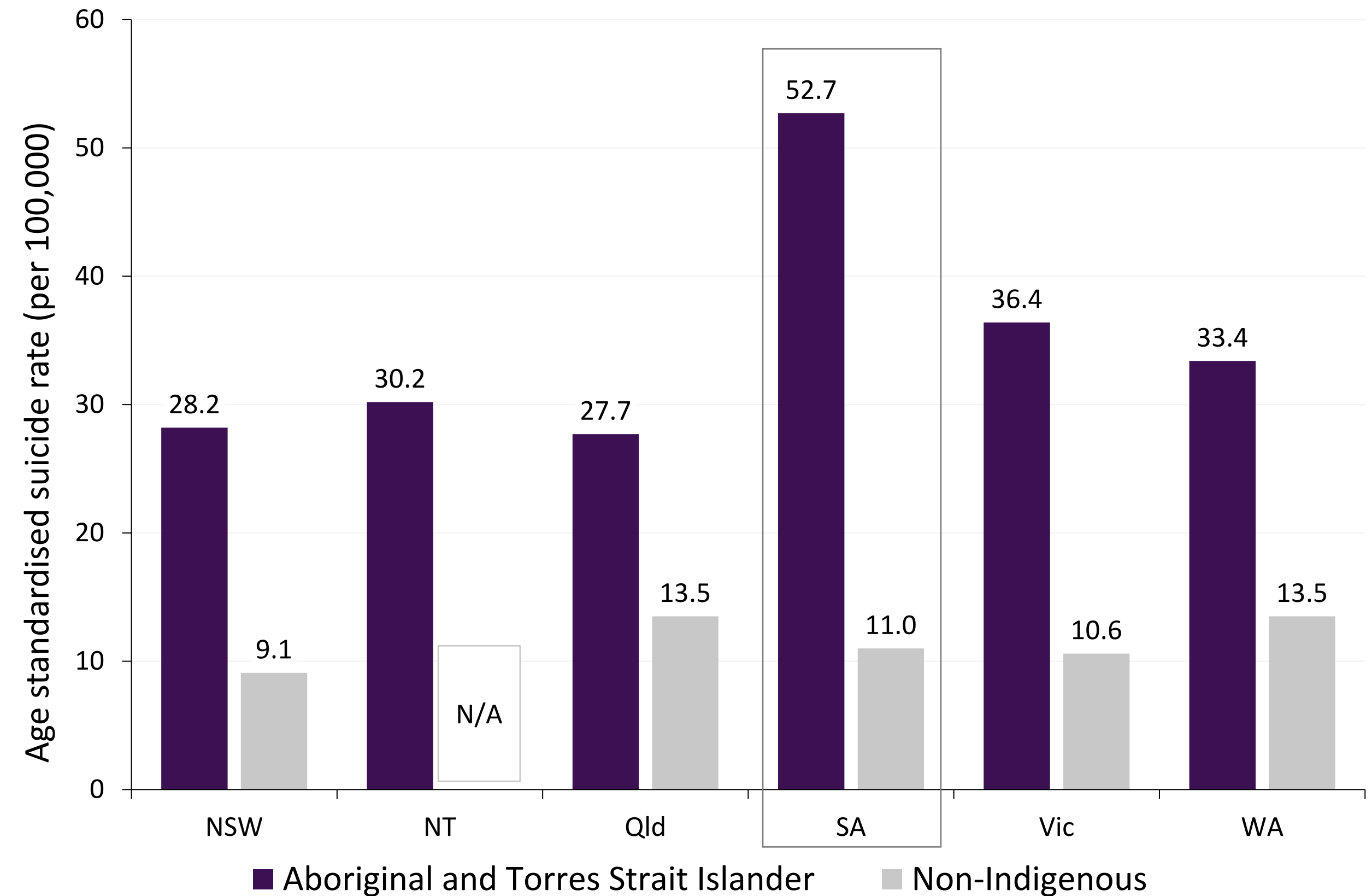
South Australia suicide data 2023



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: South Australia

South Australia in 2023

- In South Australia, **23** (**15** male, **8** female) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- Suicide was the **third leading cause of death** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in South Australia, compared to the 19th leading cause of death for non-Indigenous people.
- The age-standardised death rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**52.7 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised death rate (11.0 per 100,000).



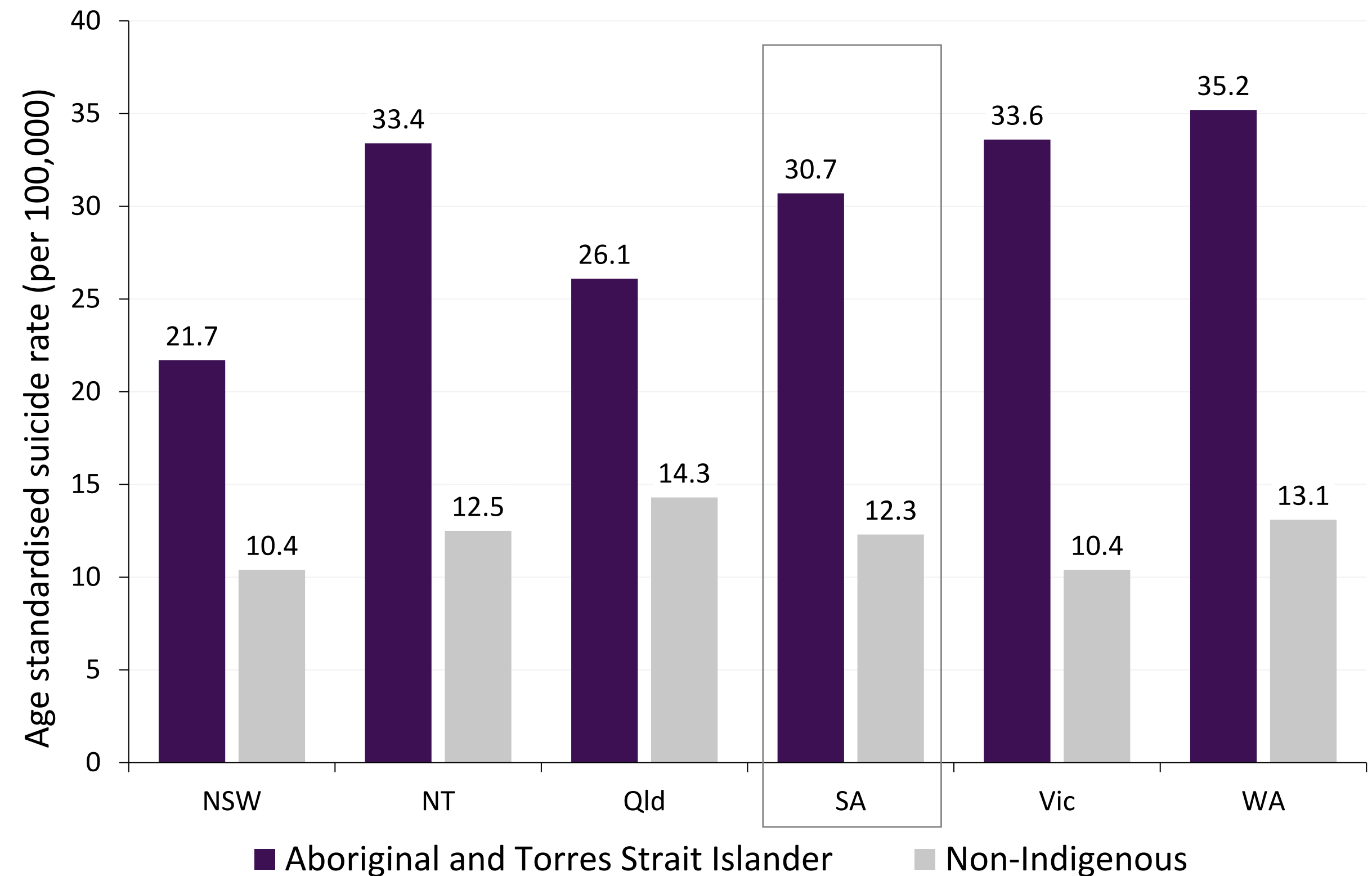
Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: South Australia

South Australia 2019-2023

- Across a five-year period, **72** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have died by suicide.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**30.7 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised suicide rate (**12.3 per 100,000**).



Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Victoria suicide data 2023



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Victoria

Victoria in 2023

- In Victoria, **26 (18 male, 8 female)** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- Suicide was the **fourth leading cause of death** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in New South Wales compared to the 17th leading cause of death for non-Indigenous people.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**36.4 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised suicide rate for New South Wales (10.6 per 100,000).



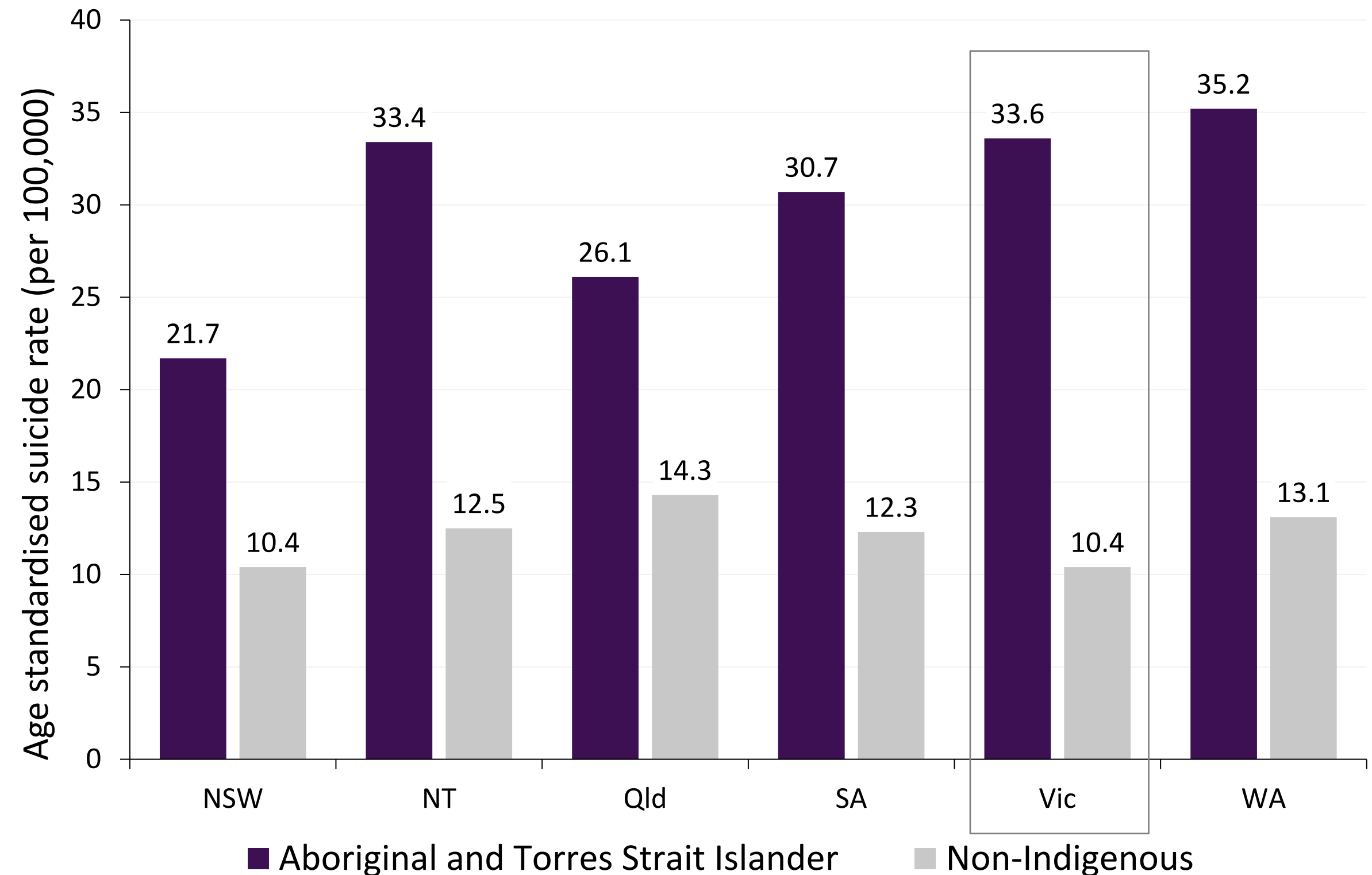
Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Victoria

Victoria 2019-2023

- Across a five-year period, **118** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have died by suicide.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**33.6 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous age-standardised suicide rate (**10.4 per 100,000**).



Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Western Australia suicide data 2023



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Western Australia

Western Australia in 2023

- In Western Australia, **37** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- Suicide was the **fourth leading cause of death** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Western Australia, compared to the 12th leading cause of death for non-Indigenous people.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**33.4 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous suicide rate (13.5 per 100,000).



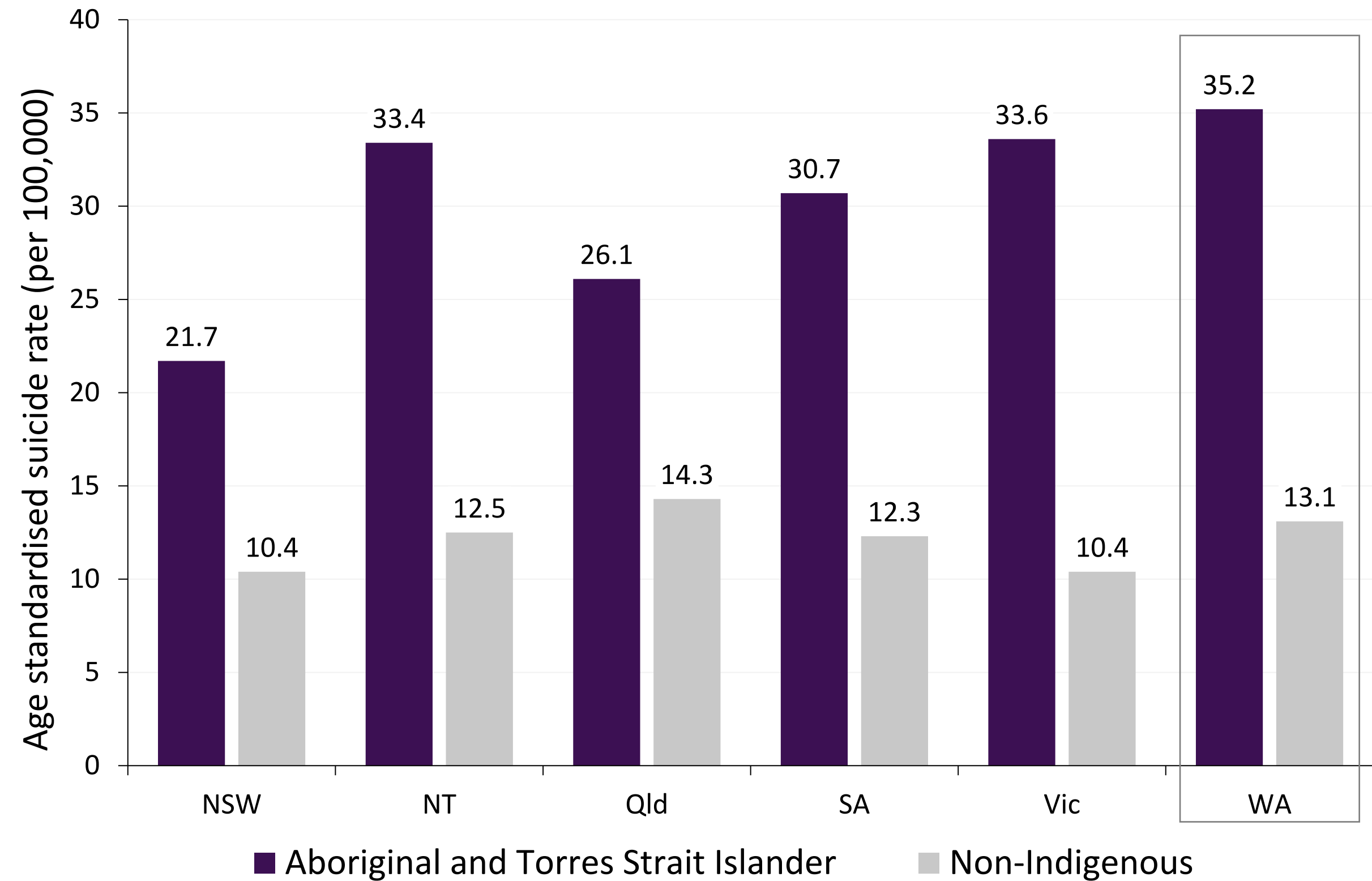
Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Western Australia

Western Australia 2019-2023

- Across a five-year period, **196** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people died by suicide.
- The age-standardised suicide rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (**35.2 per 100,000**) was higher than the non-Indigenous suicide rate (**13.1 per 100,000**).



Note: Age-standardised suicide rates are compiled from the jurisdictions of NSW, NT, Qld, SA, Vic and WA.



Key terms

Throughout this summary, **rates** are used to describe patterns and trends in the data. Alongside the number of suicide deaths, they help us to better understand and compare suicidal behaviours in different groups and over time.

Crude rates

A crude rate is the number of deaths divided by the population times 100,000.

$$\left(\frac{\text{Number of suicide deaths}}{\text{Number of people in the population}} \right) \times 100,000$$

Crude rates do not account for population differences, such as proportions of people of different ages ('age structures'), when comparing different groups.

Age-specific rates

Age-specific rates are used to measure how many deaths occurred in a specific age group.

This is calculated by dividing the number of suicide deaths in a particular age group by the total number of people in the specific age group.

$$\left(\frac{\text{Number of suicide deaths in age group}}{\text{Number of people in the population age group}} \right) \times 100,000$$

Age-standardised rates

Age-standardised rates use a formula to calculate a rate that reflects a 'standard' age structure of the population. This is useful to be able to make fairer comparisons between groups or populations over time. It is best to use age-standardised rates when comparing populations with different age groups for example, male and female if possible.



Support services

First Nations resources

13YARN 13 92 76 | 13yarn.org.au

Crisis support for First Nations people, available 24/7

Thirrili 1800 805 801

24/7 Indigenous suicide postvention service

Centre for Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATSISP)

cbpatsisp.com.au

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health

Organisations naccho.org.au

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au

WellMob wellmob.org.au

Other supports and resources

Lifeline 13 11 14 | Text 0477 13 11 14 (24/7)

lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467 | suicidecallbackservice.org.au

StandBy Support After Suicide 1300 727 247

Mensline 1300 78 99 78 | mensline.org.au

QLife 1800 184 527 | qlife.org.au

LGBTIQ+ service available 3pm - midnight

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 | kidshelpline.com.au

Health to Health headtohealth.gov.au



Life in Mind is a knowledge exchange portal providing translated evidence, policy, data and resources in suicide prevention, and host of the *National communications charter (the Charter)*.

lifeinmind.org.au |  @lifeinmind |      @EverymindAU

The Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATSIISP) is located at the University of Western Australia (UWA) and is Australia's leading voice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention. The CBPATSIISP is engaged in a range of activities, which ultimately aim to prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide and strengthen social and emotional wellbeing.

cbpatsisp.com.au |   @CBPATSIISP  @Centre_of_Best_Practice

