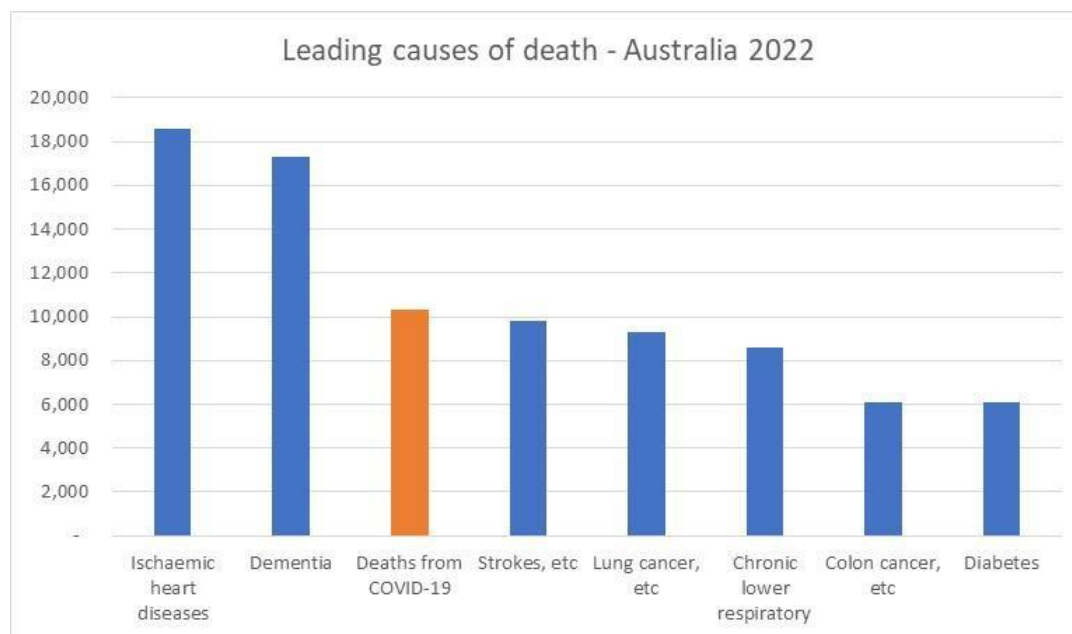


COVID-19 NOW AUSTRALIA'S THIRD LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH

COVID-19 has become one of Australia's top three leading causes of death in 2022, having claimed more lives than stroke, lung and colon cancer, lower respiratory disease, and diabetes, research released by the Actuaries Institute today shows.

The latest analysis by Institute's COVID-19 Mortality Working Group is based on the full year Provisional Mortality Statistics for 2022 released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.



The Working Group found the number of Australians who died from COVID-19 in 2022 rose to 10,300, which was 7.5 times the 1,400 COVID-19 deaths recorded for 2021 and pushed the disease up from the 34th leading cause of death to the third in just 12 months.

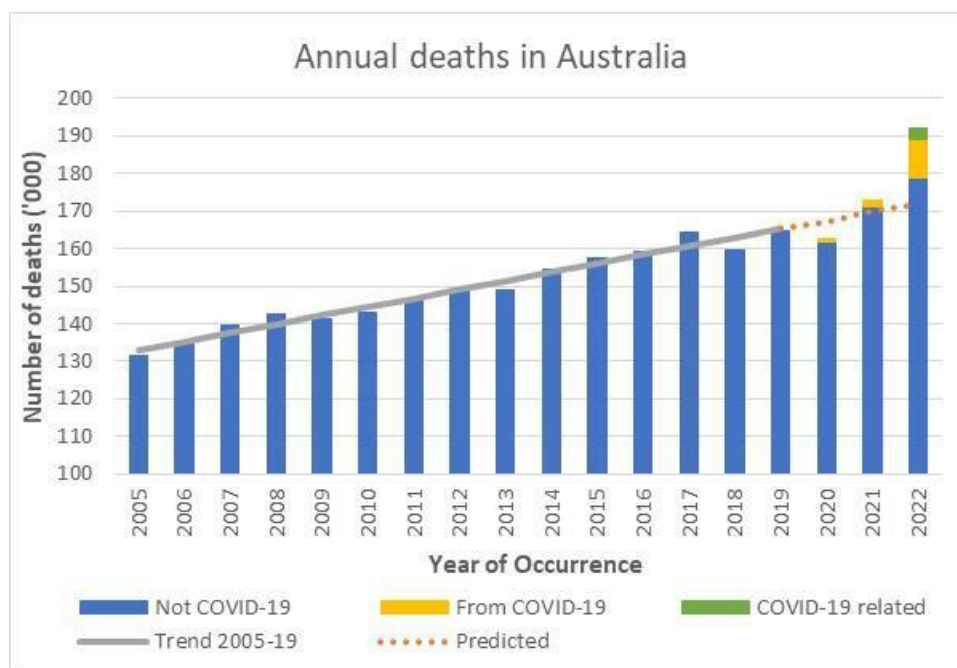
The Group also confirmed that 20,200 more deaths than expected were recorded during 2022, which was far above the 2,900 excess deaths for 2021. This extended Australia's excess mortality rate - or the increase in the number of deaths compared to expert predictions – to 12%.

Actuaries Institute Chief Executive, Elayne Grace, said: "This analysis shows the distressing grip COVID-19 had on Australia during 2022. In the space of just one year, the number of deaths significantly increased in our country."

While deaths from COVID-19 accounted for over half the excess deaths in 2022, another 2,900 deaths had the virus listed as a contributing cause. Of the remaining 7,000 excess deaths, COVID-19 was not listed as a factor on the death certificate but could possibly have played a role in mortality risk, particularly for people with heart disease, stroke, dementia, and diabetes.

The Working Group found that ischaemic heart disease and dementia retained their places as the top two leading causes of death, claiming 18,600 and 17,300 Australian lives respectively last year.

COVID-19 overtook cerebrovascular disease (which includes stroke, aneurysms, and blocked arteries) to be ranked third.



During the year, the number of deaths from ischaemic heart disease were 17% more than expected, while those from diabetes were 13% higher, cerebrovascular disease 9% higher, dementia 3% higher and cancer 2% higher.

Spokeswoman for the Institute's COVID-19 Mortality Working Group, Karen Cutter, said: "The rank order of the top five leading causes of death had remained the same since 2018, but that changed in 2022 when COVID-19 became widely prevalent in Australia.

"We had predicted dementia would overtake ischaemic heart disease to be the leading cause in 2022. However, the much higher than predicted number of deaths from ischaemic heart disease in 2022 has meant it has retained its position as the number one leading cause."

Ms Cutter noted a spike in COVID-19 deaths during December 2022, when deaths from the disease averaged over 200 per week.

[View the report here.](#)

Karen Cutter is available for interview.

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About the Actuaries Institute and the Profession

As the peak professional body for Members in Australia and overseas, the Actuaries Institute represents the interests of the profession to government, business and the community.

Actuaries use data for good by harnessing the evidence to navigate into the future and make a positive impact. They think deeply about the issue at hand, whether it's advising on commercial strategy, influencing policy, or designing new products. Actuaries are adept at balancing interests of stakeholders, clients, and communities. They're called upon to give insight on complex problems, they'll look at the full picture. Actuaries analyse the data and model scenarios to form robust and outcome-centred advice.

