



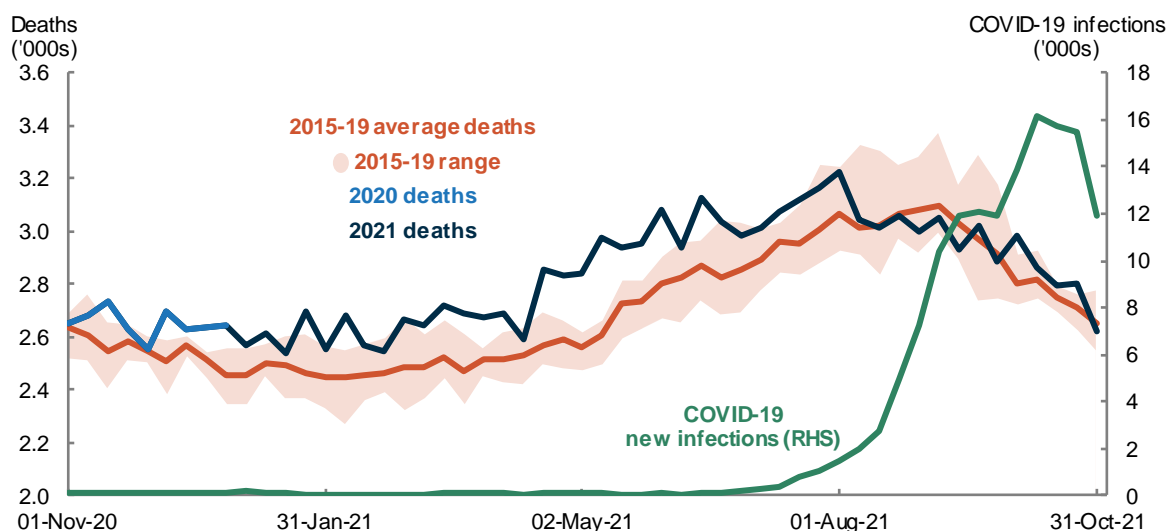
## Provisional Mortality Statistics, October 2021

Cumulatively in 2021 (until 31 October), the total number of doctor-certified deaths (124,200) was higher than the number of doctor-certified deaths in 2020 (119,200), and higher than the average over 2015-19 (118,800). The monthly number of doctor-certified deaths in October 2021 was higher than in October 2020 and the 2015-19 average. From August to October, weekly doctor-certified deaths were not significantly higher in 2021 than the 2015-19 average, despite a large increase in new COVID-19 infections over this period. Age standardised death rates for total doctor-certified deaths in 2021 have been below the 2015-19 average, suggesting that the increase in the number of cumulative deaths (when compared to 2015-19) reflects a change in the size and age structure of the population rather than an increase in mortality.

### Weekly deaths

The number of deaths each week from January through to October was generally higher in 2021 than the 2015-19 average. Notably, from August to October, weekly doctor-certified deaths were not significantly higher in 2021 than the 2015-19 average, despite a large increase in new COVID-19 infections over this period (Chart 1).

**Chart 1. WEEKLY DOCTOR-CERTIFIED DEATHS AND COVID-19 INFECTIONS, 1 NOVEMBER 2020 TO 31 OCTOBER 2021**

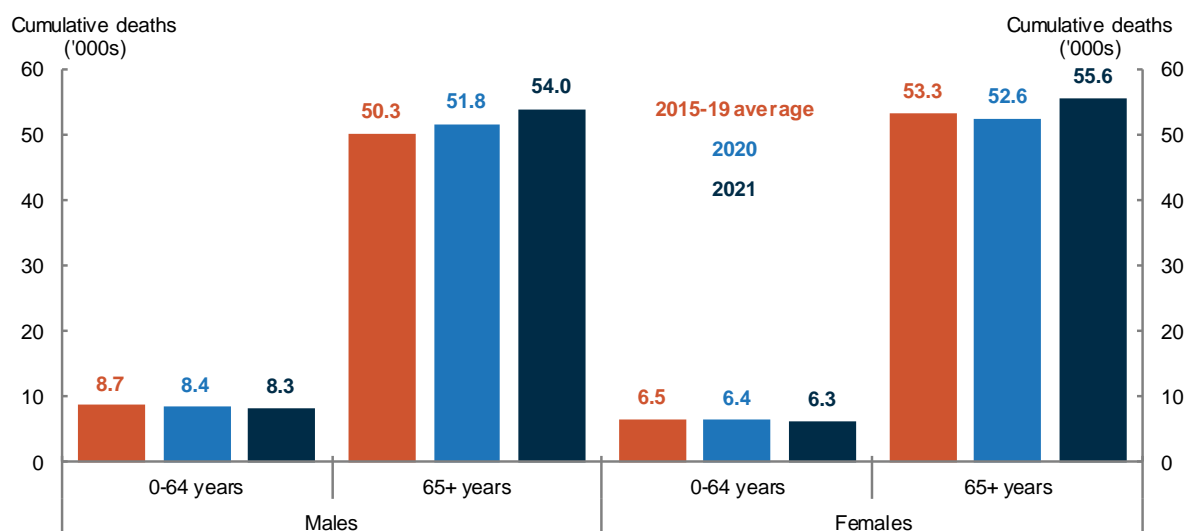


### Cumulative deaths

In October 2021, the cumulative number of doctor-certified deaths (124,200) was higher than the number of deaths in 2020 (119,200) and was above the 2015-19 average (118,800).

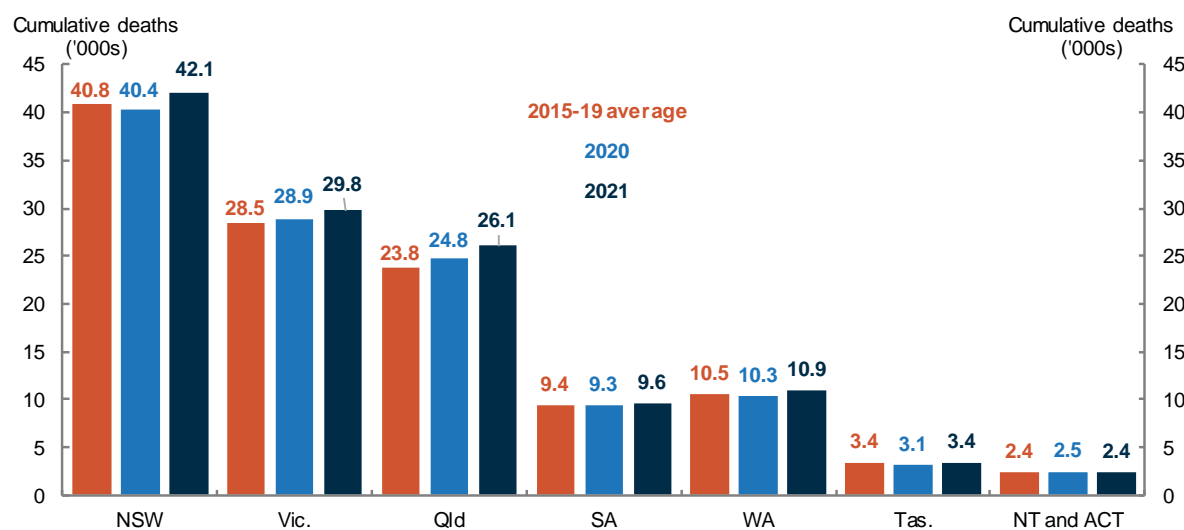
Compared with the 2015-19 average, there have been slightly more doctor-certified deaths in 2021 for males and females aged over 65 years (an increase of 7 and 4 per cent respectively) (Chart 2).

**Chart 2. CUMULATIVE DOCTOR-CERTIFIED DEATHS BY AGE AND SEX, JANUARY TO OCTOBER**



Cumulative doctor-certified deaths in 2021 were slightly higher in most states and territories when compared with 2020 and the 2015-19 average (Chart 3).

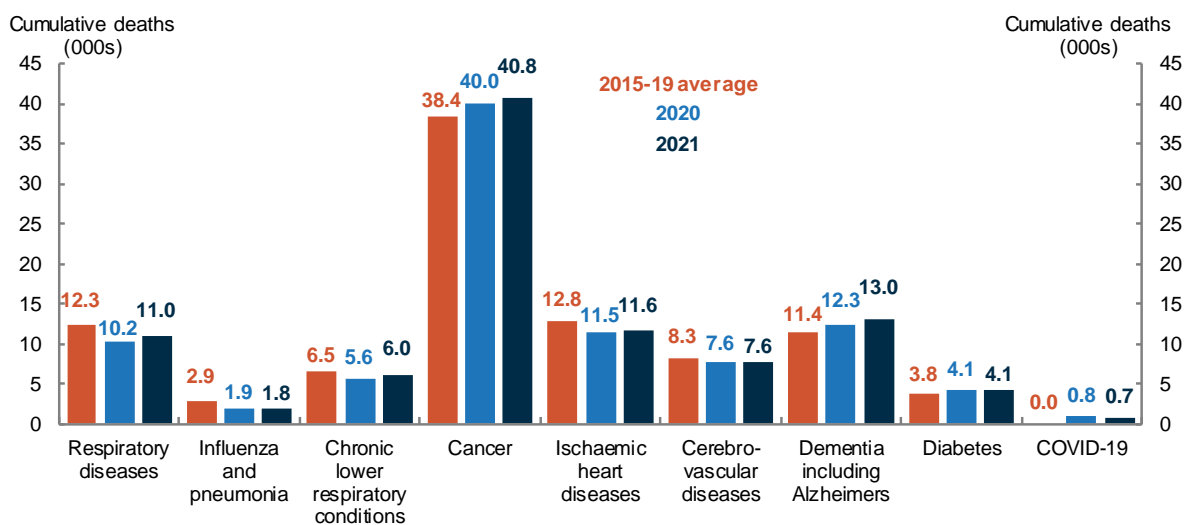
**Chart 3. CUMULATIVE DOCTOR-CERTIFIED DEATHS BY STATE/TERRITORY OF REGISTRATION, JANUARY TO OCTOBER**



Cumulative doctor-certified deaths due to influenza and pneumonia in 2021 were 38 per cent lower than the 2015-19 average, while doctor-certified deaths due to dementia and diabetes in 2021 were 14 and 9 per cent higher respectively than the 2015-19 average (Chart 4). Cumulative doctor-certified deaths due to COVID-19 in 2021 were 17 per cent lower than in 2020 despite new infections being 420 per cent higher over the same period in 2021<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Daily new COVID-19 infection data sourced from [Our World in Data](#).

**Chart 4. CUMULATIVE DOCTOR-CERTIFIED DEATHS BY SPECIFIED CAUSE OF DEATH, JANUARY TO OCTOBER**



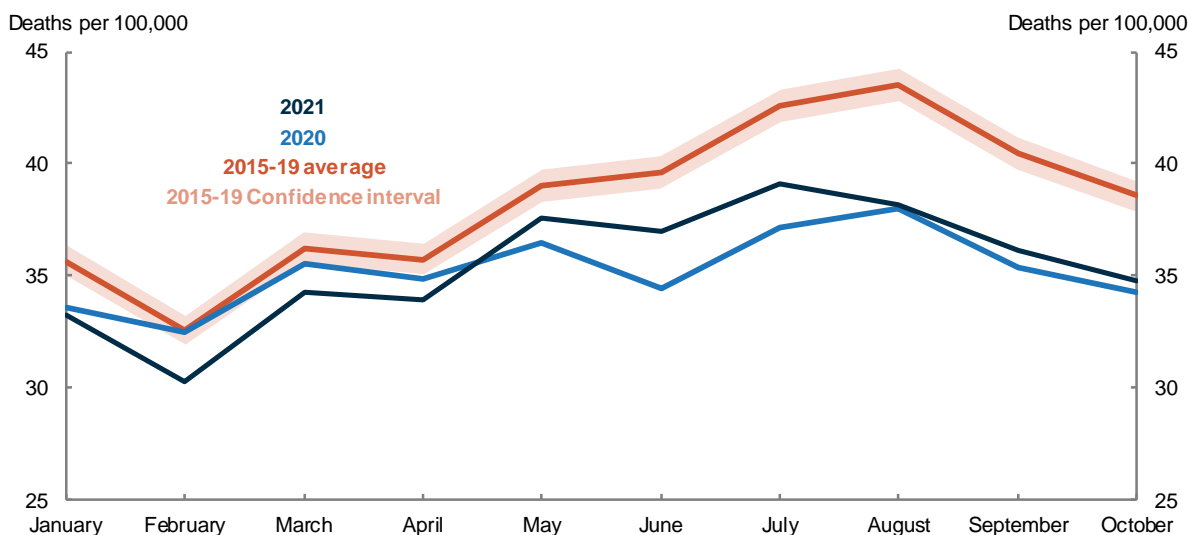
Note: Chart 4 shows the main causes of doctor-certified deaths and does not sum to total doctor-certified deaths for the period.

### Age standardised death rates

Age standardised death rates allow comparison of mortality trends across populations of different size and age structure. They are expressed as deaths per 100,000 population.

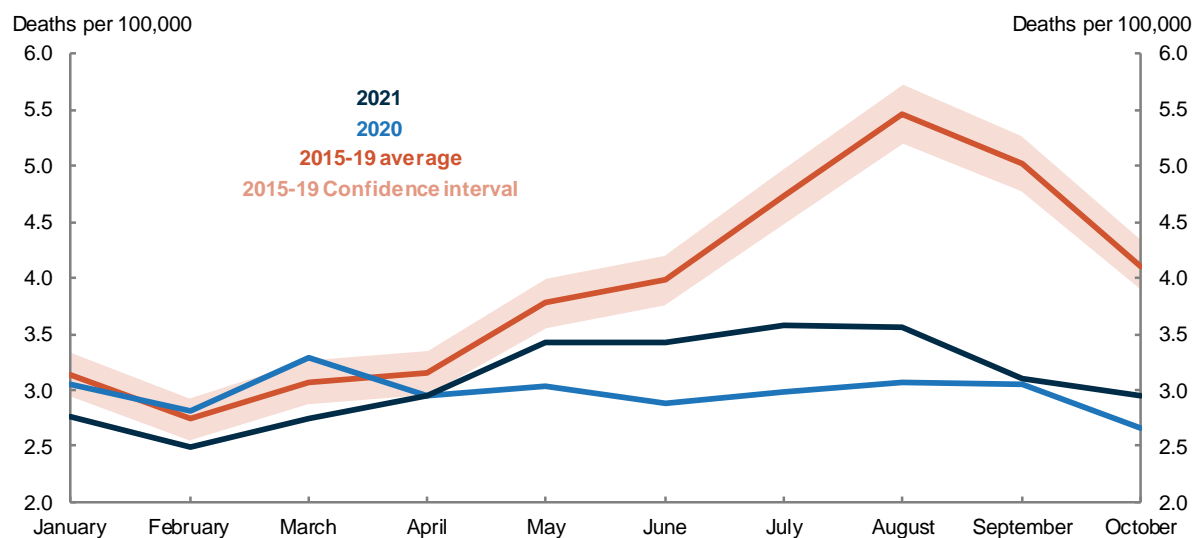
From January to October 2021, age standardised death rates for total doctor-certified deaths have been lower when compared to the 2015-19 average (Chart 5).

**Chart 5. MONTHLY AGE STANDARDISED DEATH RATES FOR TOTAL DOCTOR-CERTIFIED DEATHS, JANUARY TO OCTOBER**



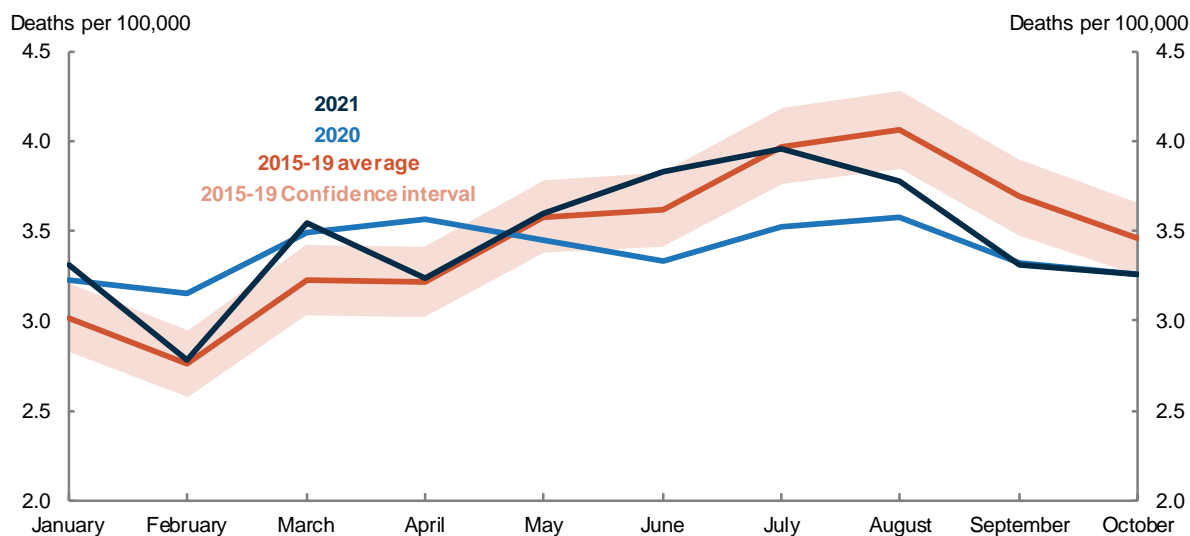
Age standardised death rates for respiratory diseases in 2021 have also been lower than the 2015-19 average (Chart 6). This suggests that the decrease in deaths due to respiratory diseases was driven by factors other than changes in the population size and age structure. Pandemic-related restrictions, social distancing and better hygiene practices may be factors contributing to lower age standardised death rates in 2021 and 2020 compared to the 2015-19 average.

**Chart 6. MONTHLY AGE STANDARDISED DEATH RATES FOR RESPIRATORY DISEASE, JANUARY TO OCTOBER**



Age standardised death rates for dementia for 2021 are close to the 2015-19 average (Chart 7). This suggests that the increase in cumulative dementia deaths compared to the 2015-19 average can largely be explained by an increase in population size, particularly at older ages.

**Chart 7. MONTHLY AGE STANDARDISED DEATH RATES FOR DEMENTIA, JANUARY TO OCTOBER**



**Table 1. UPCOMING MAJOR POPULATION RELEASES**

Release	Former catalogue	Release date
National, state and territory population September 2021	3101.0	17/03/2022
Regional population, 2020-21	3218.0	29/03/2022

## **NOTES**

Data for this release includes doctor-certified deaths that occurred by 31 October 2021 and were registered by 30 November 2021.

Provisional data in this release only includes doctor-certified deaths, and therefore not comparable with the annual *Deaths* and *Causes of Death* data released by the ABS, which also include coroner-certified deaths. Each year just over 10 per cent of deaths in Australia are certified by a coroner. These include reportable deaths including suicides, drug overdoses and assaults.

Each new *Provisional Mortality Statistics* release will include those deaths that have been registered and reported to the Australian Bureau of Statistics since the previous release. As some of those deaths will have occurred in time periods covered in previous reports, the counts of deaths for those time periods will change from one report to the next. As a result, the cumulative numbers of deaths for the January-December period will change in future releases.

*Provisional Mortality Statistics* is released on a monthly basis by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The Centre for Population prepares notes analysing these releases on a quarterly basis.

Further detail is available from the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

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