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Chief Coroner releases provisional annual suicide figures

Chief Coroner Judge Deborah Marshall today released the annual provisional suicide statistics, which show 606 people died by suicide in the 2016/17 year – the third year in a row that the number has increased.

This is the highest number of suicide deaths since the provisional statistics were first recorded for the 2007/08 year, and follows last year's total of 579 (2015/16), and 564 in the year before that (2014/15).

However, the suicide rate per 100,000 people for the year (12.64), while higher than last year (12.33) was similar to that in 2010/11 (12.65).

Judge Marshall said New Zealand had much to do to turn around its stubbornly high rate of suicide.

“In the last year we've seen a lot of discussion about suicide and the incredible emotional toll it takes on those who are left behind. While acknowledging that people are taking their own lives is important, it is only part of the conversation about suicide in the community.

“What is equally important is our discussion around how we can prevent suicides and how everyone – family, friends and colleagues – is able to recognise someone at risk and ensure they get the professional help they need.”

This year's figures show:

- The 20-24 year-old age cohort recorded the highest number of suicide deaths (79), followed by 64 each in both the 25-29 and 40-44 year-old cohorts. Last year, the 25-29-year-old age cohort recorded the highest number of suicide deaths (66), followed by the 20-24-year-old cohort (60) and 45-49 age group (57).
- Māori suicide death numbers are up by one from last year with 130, which was the same as two years earlier. Māori continue to have the highest suicide rate of all ethnic groups at 21.73.

Please note:

The information provided relates to provisional suicide figures and will slightly differ from the Ministry of Health figures. They include active cases before Coroners where intent has yet to be established therefore may eventually be found not to be suicides. In addition Ministry of Health figures are recorded by calendar year.

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