



Our Ref: 35-19781

Treasurer; Attorney General

Hon Giz Watson MLC
Committee Clerk
Estimates and Financial Operations Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

PUBLIC

Attention: Ms Renae Jewell

Dear ~~Ms Watson~~ *Giz*

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS – HEARING WITH THE STATE CORONER

Thank you for your correspondence dated 21 March 2012 relating to the State Coroner's attendance at the hearing of the Estimates and Financial Operations Committee on 19 March 2012. Answers to the questions raised by the Hon Ljiljana Ravlich MLC, concerning Western Australian suicide statistics have been prepared and are attached for the committee's information.

It is important to note that suicide statistics are not easily accessible through the current coronial case management system and that a manual interrogation and assessment of all coronial cases needs to be undertaken to derive the data presented in the attached answers to the questions raised.

In addition, the determination of "suicide" for a coronial case can only be made by a coroner after consideration of a detailed police investigation report, and in certain circumstances, independent advice from a medical adviser and the consideration of the deceased's medical history.

The data provided in the attached response from 2008 to 28 March 2012 relates to all coronial cases where an assessment of the circumstance of the death indicates the case is possibly a suicide case. However, it must be acknowledged that this initial assessment may or may not be confirmed at the completion of the coroner's finding.

As a consequence, suicide data relating to finalised cases are considered reliable, but as explained above, the final outcome in relation to open cases can change depending on the coroner's final determination in relation to that case. For this reason the data in the tables prepared for this response includes a second figure in brackets which is the number of cases still outstanding and pending the final determination of a coroner.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Hon C. Christian Porter MLA
TREASURER; ATTORNEY GENERAL

16 APR 2012

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION



Monday, 19 March 2012

Department of the Attorney General

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC asked: –

Question No 1:

I refer to the number of youth suicides in rural and regional Western Australia that have been investigated by the Coroner –

1.1. Please provide a breakdown of young people under the age of 25 who died by suicide in each of the coronial jurisdiction regions for the years 2008 to present.

Answer:

The following table shows the total number of cases where there has been a determination made by a coroner and the number of those cases, in brackets, where a final determination is still pending further investigation:

Suicide cases of young people under the age of 25 years

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 (as at 28/3/12)
Perth	36 (5)	32 (1)	29 (1)	34 (25)	9 (9)
Albany	5 (2)	2	3 (2)	1	0
Broome	7	2	1	12	1 (1)
Bunbury	2	1	1	7 (5)	0
Carnarvon	1	2	0	2 (1)	0
Geraldton	0	0	2	0	0
Northam	1	0	2 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
Kalgoorlie	2	2	2	5 (3)	0
Kununurra	0	4	0	1 (1)	1 (1)
South Hedland	2	1	1	0	1 (1)
Total	56 (7)	46 (1)	41 (4)	63 (36)	13 (13)

Footnote:

The final determination of a finding of suicide can only be made by a coroner after consideration of a detailed investigation report, which may include the deceased's medical history. The numbers in brackets indicate the coronial investigations which are ongoing. An assessment has been made in relation to these matters, which indicates they are possible suicide cases, however, that assessment may or may not be confirmed by the completion of the coroners' finding. For example, in the above table there are 36 cases of suicide in Perth in 2008, 5 of which are pending a final determination and 31 in which a final determination has been made.

1.2. Please provide the names of the town and the years in which the suicides from 1.1 occurred.

Answer: This information cannot be accessed by interrogating the current local case management system. Data is maintained by coronial jurisdictional regions.

1.3. Please provide a breakdown, as per (1.1), for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal suicides

Answer:

The determination of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal suicides is not always evident on material supplied by police in respect of open cases (where there has not been a determination by a coroner). The system records information obtained by police shortly after the death and at this stage Aboriginality is often not recorded. In respect of closed cases, Aboriginality is recorded so these figures are considered relatively reliable. The following table shows only those cases where Aboriginality has been identified. All other cases appear as non-Aboriginal.

The following table shows the total number of cases where there has been a determination made by a coroner and the number of those cases, in brackets, where a final determination is still pending further investigation:

Aboriginal suicide case of young people under the age of 25 years

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 (as at 28/3/12)
Perth	1	0	5	0	0
Albany	3 (2)	1	0	0	0
Broome	7	2	1	11	1 (1)
Bunbury	0	0	0	0	0
Carnarvon	0	2	0	0	0
Geraldton	0	0	0	0	0
Northam	0	0	2 (1)	0	0
Kalgoorlie	0	1	1	1 (1)	0
Kununurra	0	4	0	0	1 (1)
South Hedland	2	0	0	0	0
Total	13 (2)	10	9 (1)	12 (1)	2 (2)

Footnote:

The final determination of a finding of suicide can only be made by a coroner after consideration of a detailed investigation report, which may include the deceased's medical history. The numbers in brackets indicate the coronial investigations which are ongoing. An assessment has been made in relation to these matters which indicate they are possible suicide cases, however, that assessment may or may not be confirmed by the completion of the coroners' finding. For example, in the above table there are 3 cases of suicide in Albany in 2008, 2 of which are pending a final determination and 1 in which a final determination has been made.

The following table shows the total number of cases where there has been a determination made by a coroner and the number of those cases, in brackets, where a final determination is still pending further investigation:

Non-Aboriginal Suicide cases of young people under the age of 25 years

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 (as at 28/3/12)
Perth	35 (5)	32 (1)	24 (1)	34 (25)	9 (9)
Albany	2	1	3 (2)	1	0
Broome	0	0	0	1	0
Bunbury	2	1	1	7 (5)	0
Carnarvon	1	0	0	2 (1)	0
Geraldton	0	0	2	0	0
Northam	1	0	0	1 (1)	1 (1)
Kalgoorlie	2	1	1	4 (2)	0
Kununurra	0	0	0	1 (1)	0
South Hedland	0	1	1	0	1 (1)
Total	43 (5)	36 (1)	32 (3)	51 (35)	11 (11)

Footnote:

The final determination of a finding of suicide can only be made by a coroner after consideration of a detailed investigation report, which may include the deceased's medical history. The numbers in brackets indicate the coronial investigations which are ongoing. An assessment has been made in relation to these matters which indicate they are possible suicide cases, however, that assessment may or may not be confirmed by the completion of the coroners' finding. For example, in the above table there are 35 cases of suicide in Perth in 2008, 5 of which are pending a final determination and 30 in which a final determination has been made.

Question No 2

I refer to the number of youth suicides in rural and regional Western Australia that have been investigated by the Coroner -

2.1. Please provide a breakdown of people over the age of 25 who died by suicide in each of the coronial jurisdiction regions for the years 2008 to present.

Answer:

The following table shows the total number of cases where there has been a determination made by a coroner and the number of those cases, in brackets, where a final determination is still pending further investigation:

Suicide cases of people over the age of 25 years

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 (as at 28/3/12)
Perth	203 (5)	166 (15)	214 (20)	177 (112)	58 (58)
Albany	11 (1)	10 (1)	8 (1)	11 (3)	1 (1)
Broome	8	5	5 (2)	5 (2)	2 (2)
Bunbury	11	14 (1)	21	25 (11)	8 (8)
Carnarvon	2	5	2	2 (1)	0
Geraldton	3	10	8	8 (7)	1 (1)
Northam	4	8	3	5	2 (2)
Kalgoorlie	6	7	8	9 (2)	1 (1)
Kununurra	1	3	1	2	1 (1)
South Hedland	6	5	4 (1)	4 (2)	1 (1)
Total	255 (6)	233 (17)	274 (24)	248 (140)	75 (75)

Footnote:

The final determination of a finding of suicide can only be made by a coroner after consideration of a detailed investigation report, which may include the deceased's medical history. The numbers in brackets indicate the coronial investigations which are ongoing. An assessment has been made in relation to these matters which indicate they are possible suicide cases, however, that assessment may or may not be confirmed by the completion of the coroners' finding. For example, in the above table there are 203 cases of suicide in Perth in 2008, 5 of which are pending a final determination and 198 in which a final determination has been made.

2.2. Please provide the names of the town and the years in which the suicides from 2.1 occurred.

Answer:

This information cannot be accessed by interrogating the current local case management system. Data is maintained by coronial jurisdictional regions.

Please provide a breakdown, as per (2.1), for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal suicides.

Answer:

The determination of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal suicides is not always evident on material supplied by police in respect of open cases (where there has not been a determination by a coroner). The system records information obtained by police shortly after the death and at this stage Aboriginality is often not recorded. In respect of closed cases, Aboriginality is recorded so these figures are considered relatively reliable. The following table shows only those cases where Aboriginality has been identified. All other cases appear as non-Aboriginal.

The following table shows the total number of cases where there has been a determination made by a coroner and the number of those cases, in brackets, where a final determination is still pending further investigation:

Aboriginal suicide cases of people over the age of 25 years

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 (as at 28/3/12)
Perth	8 (1)	3	4	0	0
Albany	5 (1)	0	1	0	0
Broome	4	2	1	3 (1)	0
Bunbury	0	0	2	0	1 (1)
Carnarvon	0	0	0	0	0
Geraldton	1	1	1	0	0
Northam	0	0	1	0	2 (2)
Kalgoorlie	1	1	0	0	0
Kununurra	1	2	1	1	1 (1)
South Hedland	1	2	2	0	0
Total	21 (2)	11	13	4 (1)	4 (4)

Footnote:

The final determination of a finding of suicide can only be made by a coroner after consideration of a detailed investigation report, which may include the deceased's medical history. The numbers in brackets indicate the coronial investigations which are ongoing. An assessment has been made in relation to these matters which indicate they are possible suicide cases, however, that assessment may or may not be confirmed by the completion of the coroners' finding. For example, in the above table there are 8 cases of suicide in Perth in 2008, 1 of which is pending a final determination and 7 in which a final determination has been made.

The following table shows the total number of cases where there has been a determination made by a coroner and the number of those cases, in brackets, where a final determination is still pending further investigation:

Non-Aboriginal suicide cases of people over the age of 25 years

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012 (as at 28/3/12)
Perth	195 (4)	163 (15)	210 (20)	177 (112)	58 (58)
Albany	6	10 (1)	7 (1)	11 (3)	1 (1)
Broome	4	3	4 (2)	2 (1)	1 (1)
Bunbury	11	14 (1)	19	25 (11)	8 (8)
Carnarvon	2	5	2	2 (1)	0
Geraldton	2	9	7	8 (7)	1 (1)
Northam	4	8	2	5	0
Kalgoorlie	5	6	8	9 (2)	1 (1)
Kununurra	0	1	0	1	0
South Hedland	5	3	2 (1)	4 (2)	1 (1)
Total	234 (4)	222 (17)	261 (24)	244 (139)	71 (71)

Footnote:

The final determination of a finding of Suicide can only be made by a Coroner after consideration of a detailed investigation report, which may include the deceased's medical history. The data enclosed in brackets indicates Coroner investigations which are ongoing and the investigation report has not been received or has been received but has not been considered by a Coroner. An assessment has been made in relation to these matters that indicate they are possible suicide cases, however, that assessment may or may not be confirmed by the completion of the Coroners' finding. For example, in the above table there are 195 cases of suicide in Perth in 2008, 4 of which are pending a final determination and 191 in which a final determination has been made.