



Government of Western Australia
Mental Health Commission

Mental Health
Commission

Suicide in Western Australia in 2014

11 November 2016



Background

- Focus of suicide prevention research in Western Australia (WA) on epidemiological data collection systems.
- The MHC in conjunction with the Telethon Kids Institute (TKI) and the Coroner's Court are currently developing the Western Australian Coronial Suicide Information System (WACSYS).
- This is to code all suicides within Western Australia between 1986 and 2015.
- WACSYS addresses the action area of the Suicide Prevention 2020 strategy - "timely data and evidence to improve responses and services".



WAC SIS

- The information will steer implementation of the state suicide prevention strategy, *Suicide Prevention 2020*.
- WAC SIS project commenced in early 2015, with ethics approval from the Coroner's Court received in late 2015.
- Coding of confirmed suicides and 196 variables/parameters for each is expected to be completed in mid-2017.
- Will provide an understanding of trends in suicide over an almost 30 year period.



2014 Mini-Monograph

- a snapshot of findings from the coded suicide data to date.
- the primary data source was WACSYS – covers data for individuals who the Western Australian Coroner’s Court has determined their death to be by an act of suicide during 2014.
- In addition, 13 cases where the Coroner has made an open finding and the Australian Bureau of Statistics have coded the underlying cause of death as intentional self harm.
- The snapshot compares 2014 data to that from 2006 to 2008.



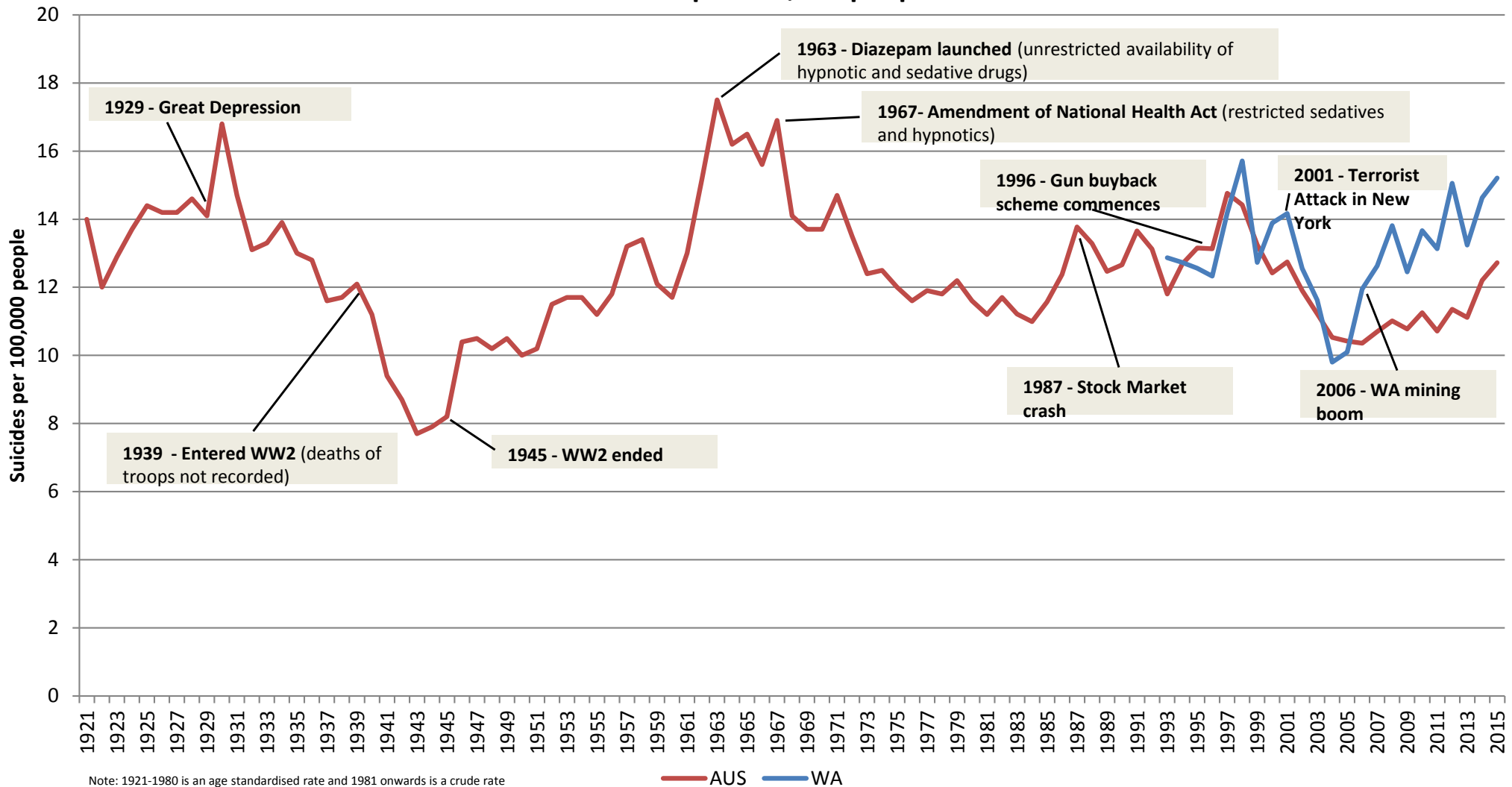
Overall figures

- The number of deaths by suicide:
 - 2014 = 352
 - 2008 = 273
 - 2007 = 251
 - 2006 = 262
- 13 deaths in 2014 currently remain open and are not included.
- The suicide rate remains relatively stable from 2006-2014, although there were changes within specific age groups.
 - Men aged 40-69 years increased.
 - Women under 25 years substantially increased.



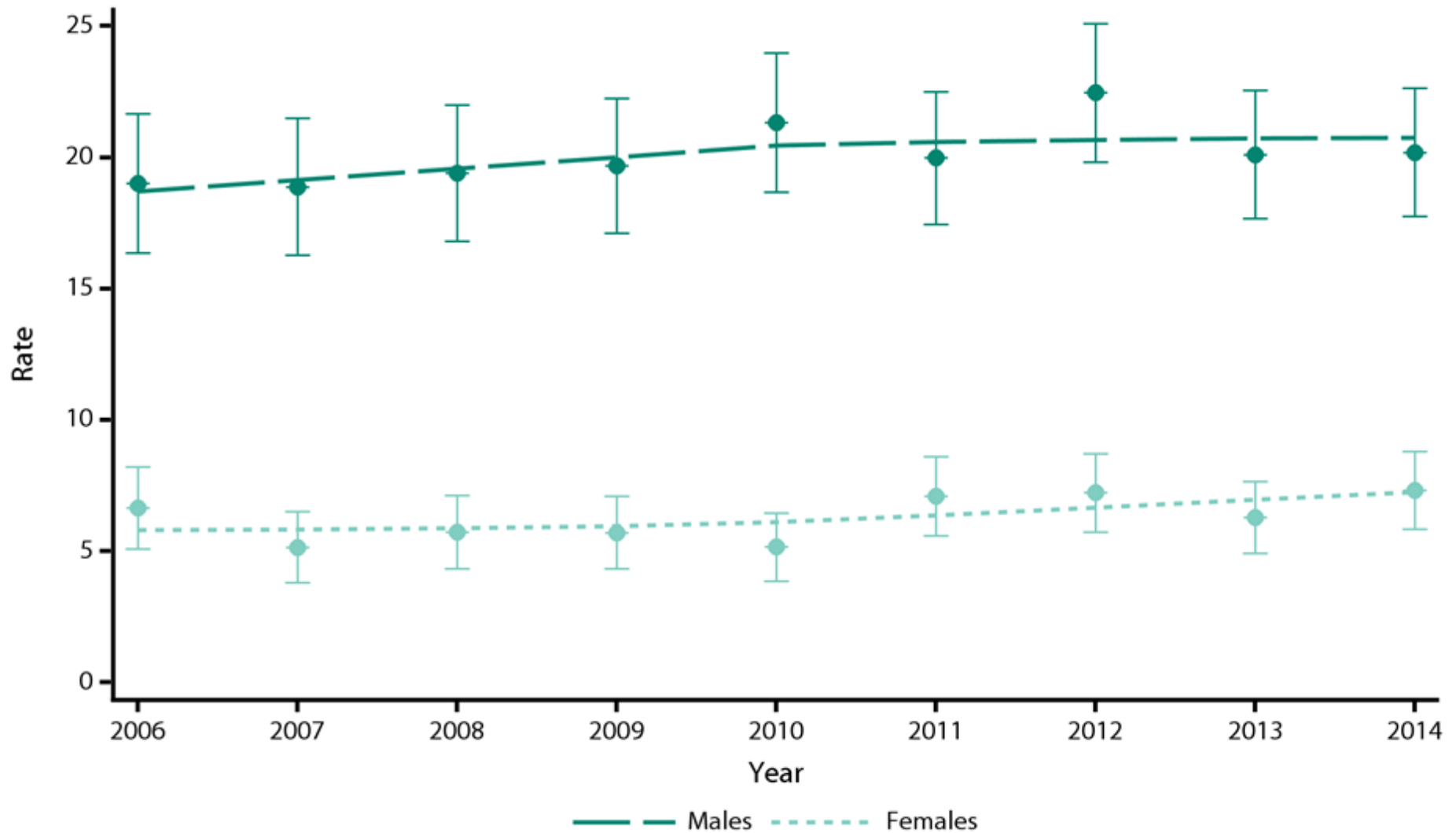
Historic Trends

Australian suicide rate per 100,000 people 1921 to 2015

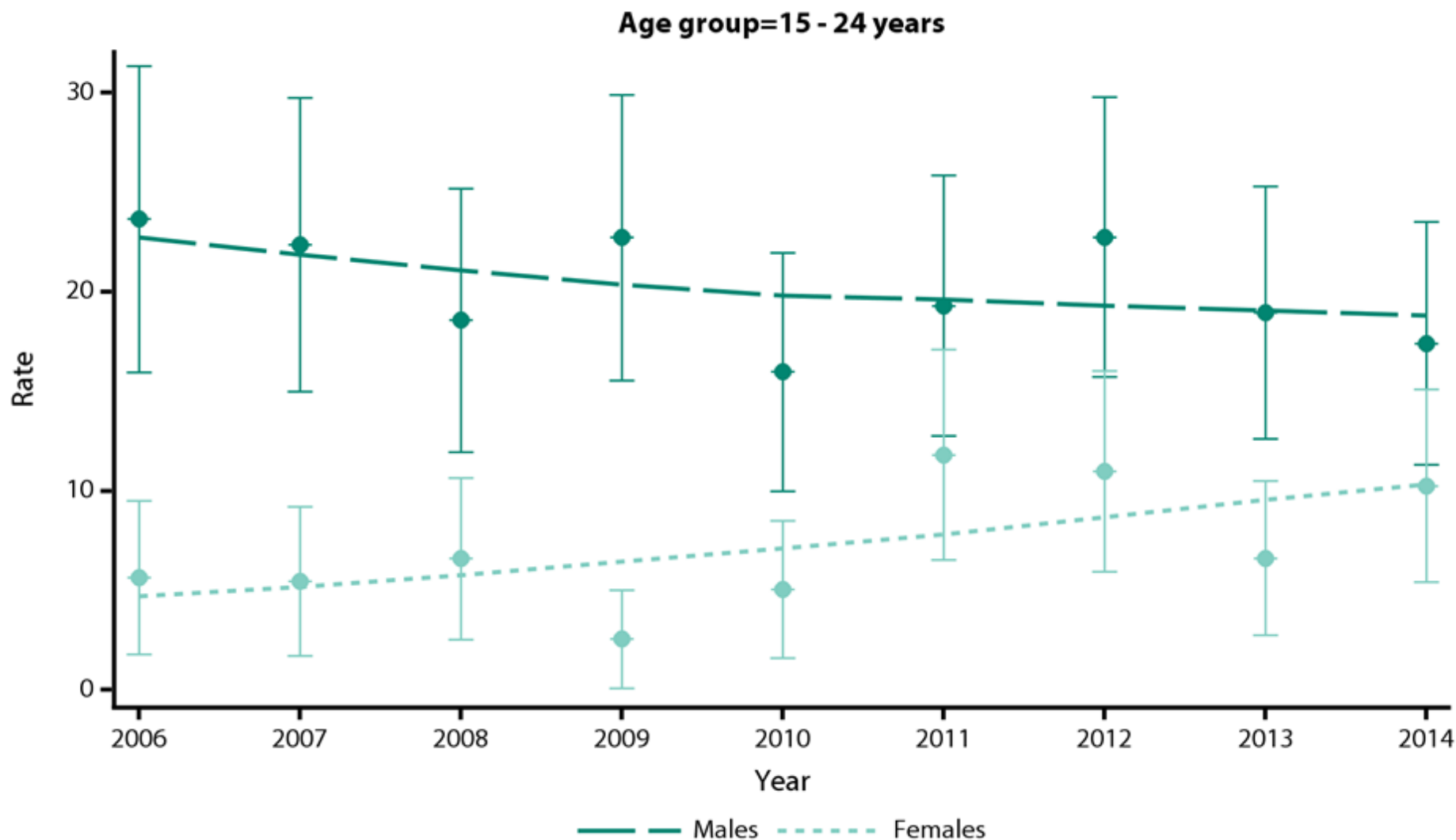




Age standardised suicide death rate, 2006 to 2014, for all ages (per 100,000)

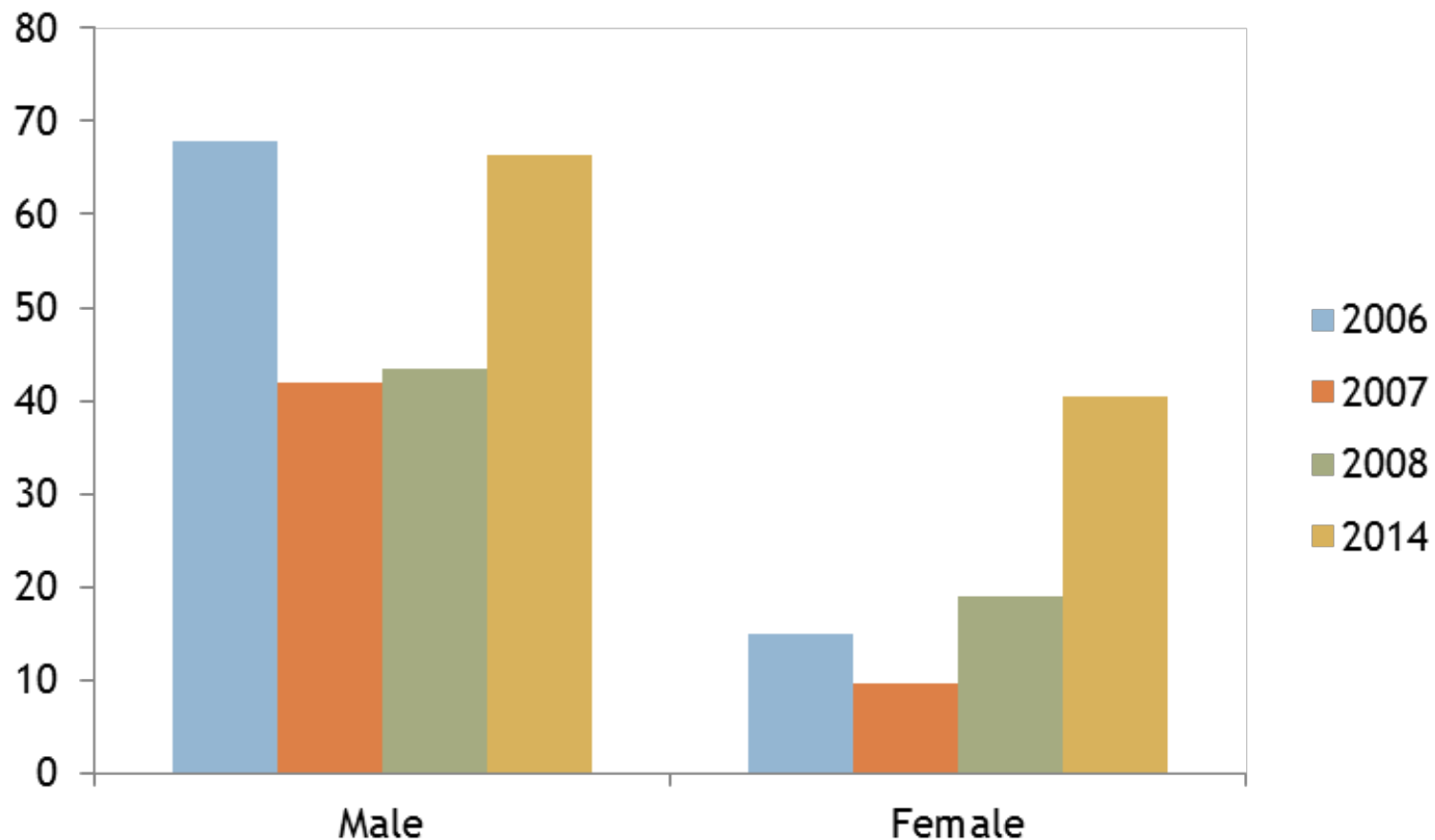


Age standardised suicide death rate, 2006 to 2014, for those aged 15-24 (per 100,000)





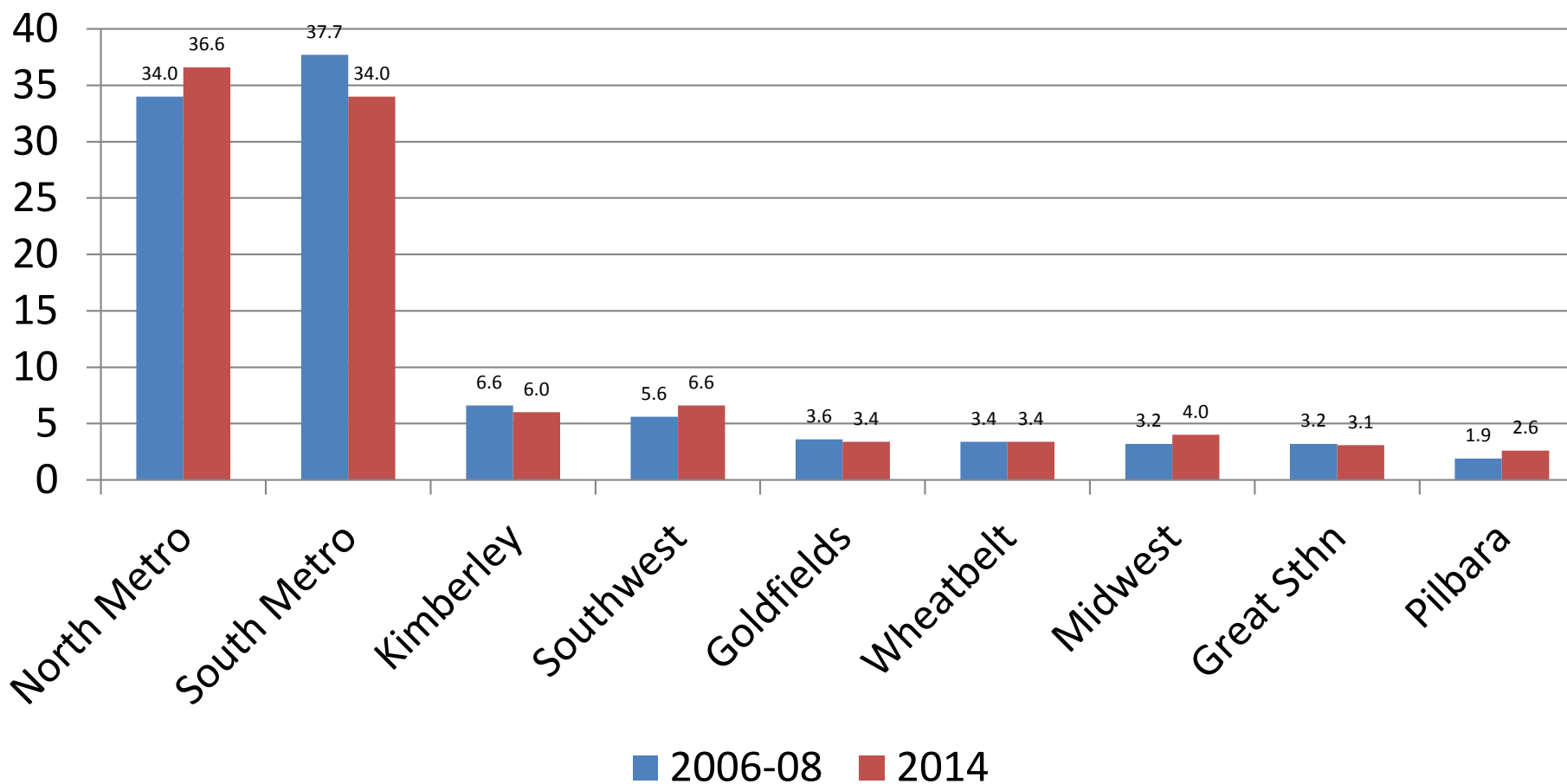
Indigenous suicide death rate (crude rate per 100,000)



- Suicide rate of indigenous people = 3 x non-indigenous



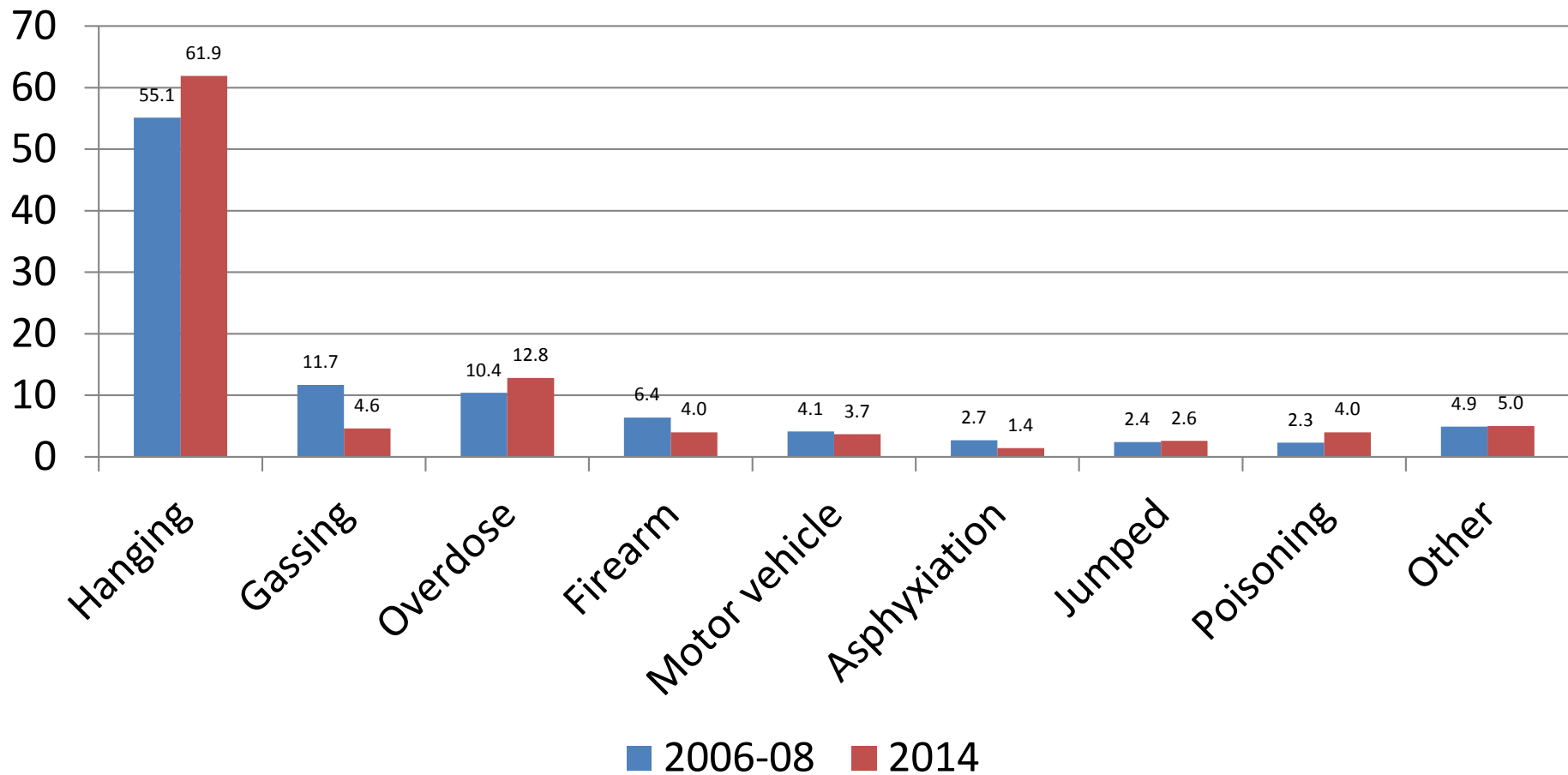
Proportion of suicide deaths by region (%)



- 71% of suicide deaths in Perth.



Proportion of suicide deaths by method (%)



- 70% of suicide deaths occurred in a home.



Suicide intention and attempts - 2014

- In 2014, 32% of people expressed an intent to suicide, prior to their death by suicide, compared to 18% in 2006-08.
 - females 41%
 - males 28%
 - Indigenous 46%
 - non-indigenous 30%
 - 25-39 yrs 45%
 - 80+ yrs 26%
- 40% of individuals that died by suicide had previously attempted.
 - 35% over 2006-2008
 - 56% of females that died by suicide had a prior attempt
 - 34% of males that died by suicide had a prior attempt



Suicide intention and attempts - 2014

- 52% had only attempted suicide once prior to death by suicide.
- multiple suicide attempts prior to death by suicide.
 - females 37%
 - males 13%
- Of those with a previous suicide attempt, 50% were less than a year prior to their death by suicide



Hospital discharge and toxicology - 2014

- 23% of all suicide deaths (80 individuals) had a recorded hospital discharge, following an admission for a psychiatric condition.
 - 25% suicided within 2 weeks
 - 30% suicided within 1 month
- Almost all individuals had drugs (including pharmaceuticals) in their system at the time of death.
 - around 15% had a fatal level of drug in their system
 - 30% had a drug at excess but not fatal levels
 - 40% had alcohol
 - 19% had cannabis
 - 13% had meth/amphetamine

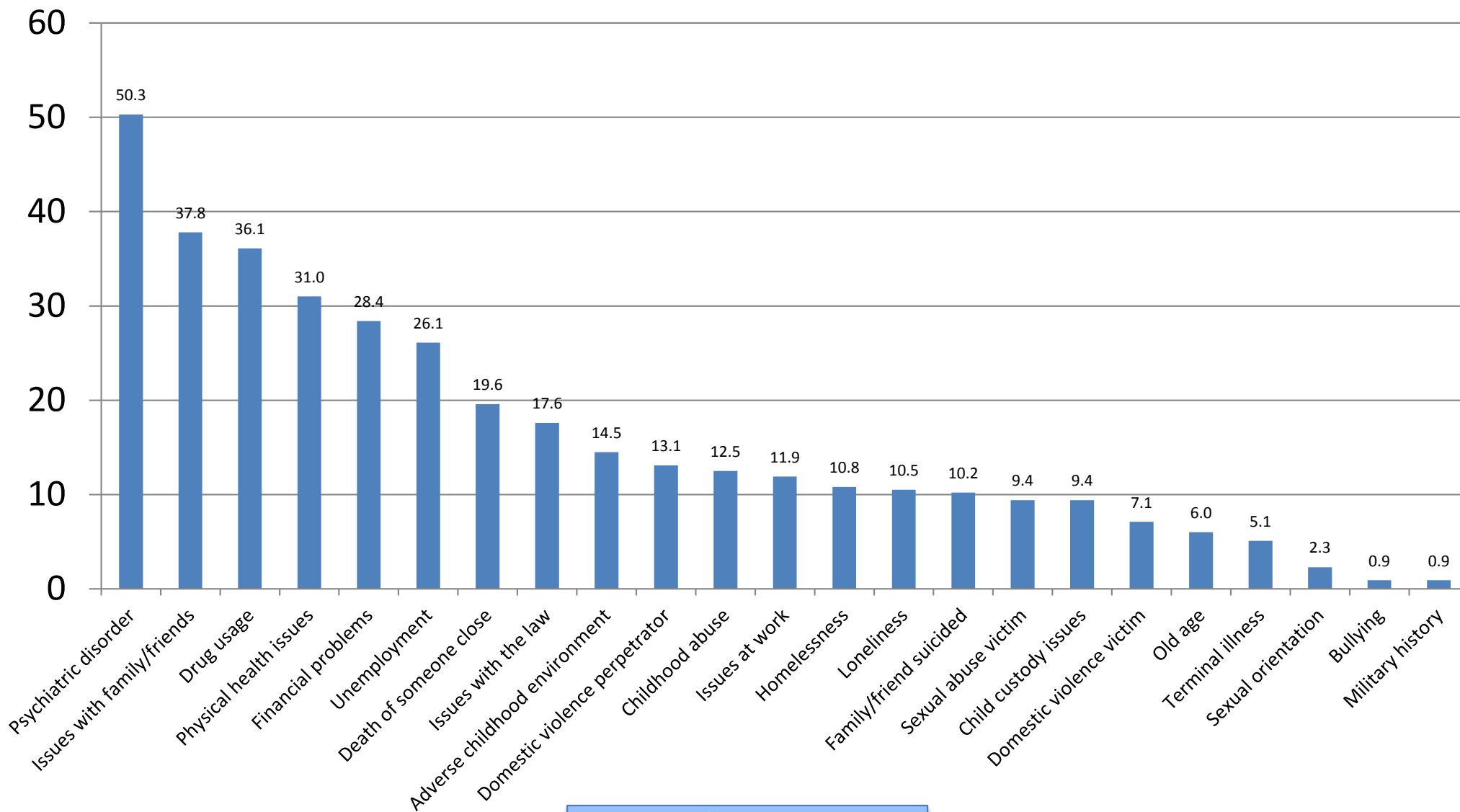


Risk factors - 2014

- Confirmed diagnosis
 - 57% had psychiatric disorder, similar to 2006-2008. (37% had a diagnosis of depressive disorder).
 - 51% had a history of substance abuse, a slight increase from 2006-08 (44%).
 - 60% of Indigenous people had a history of substance abuse.
- Stressors identified
 - 28% lowest quintile of socio-economic disadvantage
 - 17% highest quintile
 - 5% were fly-in fly-out workers, 1.7% were military or ex-military, and less than 1% were in custody.



Stressors identified in 2014 (%)



As identified in case notes



Future directions

- Once updated, this database will span almost three decades and allow for improved understanding of factors such as
 - mechanisms
 - risks,
 - vulnerable groups,
 - service use patterns and
 - geographic variations.
- The aim is to improve monitoring services, and develop and evaluate prevention and postvention strategies.
- Future enhancements include the need for reporting real time suspected suicides and data collection on suicide attempts.