

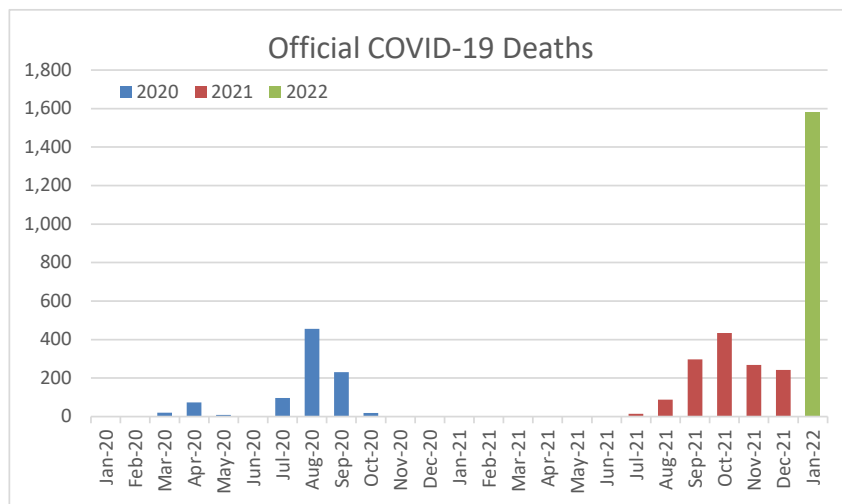
January 2022 COVID-19 deaths likely to result in 10% excess mortality for the month: Actuaries Institute

9 February 2022

- Total COVID-19 deaths in January 2022 are higher than COVID-19 deaths over the 12 months of both 2020 and 2021.
- Omicron was considered milder than Delta, but the surge in deaths is expected to result in 10 per cent more Australian deaths, from all causes, than predicted.

The surge in COVID-19 cases in December 2021 and January 2022 is expected to result in a 10 per cent increase in the total number of deaths, from all causes, in Australia during January 2022.

In January 2022, official COVID-19 deaths in Australia totalled 1,582. There were 909 official COVID-19 deaths in 2020 and a further 1,344 deaths in 2021.



The Actuaries Institute has compared Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on deaths during the pandemic to expected deaths from all causes, including respiratory illnesses such as influenza and pneumonia.

“This analysis of ABS data shows the importance of thorough analysis of complex data sets,” said Actuaries Institute Chief Executive, Elayne Grace. “Looking beyond the face value of data provides a more meaningful understanding of complex outcomes.”

Jennifer Lang, Convenor of the Actuaries Institute's COVID-19 Working Group said: “Our modelling shows that until the Omicron surge in cases, overall mortality in Australia has been lower than previous years, as the increase in deaths from COVID-19 has been more than offset by the reduction in deaths from other respiratory illnesses.

“However, most of the reduction in deaths from other respiratory illnesses has occurred during winter, so the extra nearly 1,600 deaths in January 2022 are likely to have increased mortality in Australia by around 10% for that month,” Ms Lang said.



“There is unlikely to have been a corresponding reduction in deaths from lockdowns, social distancing, border closures or other measures as we have observed very little reduction in overall mortality during the summer months of 2020 and 2021 from these measures.”

The Institute’s model measures actual deaths against predicted deaths, adjusted as the population ages and grows, and allowing for trends in mortality improvement.

“In general, our model shows expected deaths are increasing faster from demographic changes than they are reducing because of improvements to mortality,” Ms Lang said.

“So, our model predicts higher deaths each year.”

“For the month of January 2022, if there had been no pandemic, we would have expected around 13,500 to 14,000 deaths.

“However, the surge in COVID-19 deaths without any corresponding reduction in other deaths means that in January 2022 we expect to see excess mortality of around 10% once the complete death data is available.”

Jennifer Lang is available for interview.

Actuaries Digital article can be viewed [here](#).

For media inquiries please contact:

Janine MacDonald P&L Corporate Communications
m +61(0) 478 492 110

About the Actuaries Institute

As the sole professional body for Members in Australia and overseas, the Actuaries Institute represents the interests of the profession to government, business and the community. Actuaries assess risks through long-term analyses, modelling and scenario planning across a wide range of business problems. This unrivalled expertise enables the profession to comment on a range of business-related issues including enterprise risk management and prudential regulation, retirement income policy, finance and investment, general insurance, life insurance and health financing.