

more national stories from stuff



sponsored

As cooler weather arrives, bring warmer vibes inside



Todd Muller: The uninteresting middle manager lacking



Searchers find clues in hunt for trampers missing at



MP called 'useless' by Simon Bridges gets last laugh

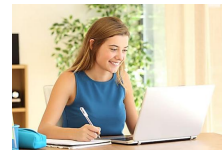
paid content

[about this content](#)



[Pics] Engineers Made A Dark Discovery When

Magellan Times



Best results for online courses. Start learning today

online courses | adsl listing

Recommended by

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertise with Stuff

Boy aged under ten committed suicide, stats reveal

Michelle Cooke · 16:31, Sep 03 2012

As more youth and Maori are claiming their own lives, it has also been revealed that a young boy under the age of 10 has recently committed suicide.

The boy was one of 547 people who killed themselves in the last year.

Chief coroner Judge Neil MacLean released the annual suicide statistics today, which cover the period from July 2011 to June 2012.

The only insight the statistics provide into the child's death is that he was male and not Maori.

It was the first death of a child aged 5 to 9 to have occurred in the last five years, but there have been other cases in the past where children have been known to take their own lives, MacLean said.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertise with Stuff

most popular

- 1 [Mum has identical quadruplets without fertility treatments](#)
- 2 [Redundant worker asks: What am I if I don't have my job?](#)
- 3 [Driver at fatal crash scene: 'They all weren't wearing seat belts'](#)

He wouldn't elaborate on the child's death, but said what was particularly worrying in the latest statistics was that more youth and Maori were committing suicide.

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertise with Stuff

However, MacLean and others who work in the area of suicide say there is no clear answer as to what is behind the "concerning trend".

The statistics show a disturbing trend of more youth, aged 15 to 19, and more Maori claiming their lives compared to the four years prior.

Suicide rates for 15-19 year olds have leapt, from 56 for the 2010/2011 year to 80 in this current period.

While there were 37 suicides among Maori youth, the annual average was 21.

Overall, suicide among Maori increased from 101 to 142.

Suicide rates in the Canterbury region fell during the 2010/2011 period, reflecting the low suicide rates after the February 2011 quake. However, 14 suicides in January this year have largely contributed to the overall figure rising above its pre-quake average.

New Zealand has some of the worst suicide statistics in the world. Men represent nearly three quarters of the deaths, while hanging equates for more deaths than every other method combined.

While the overall figure has remained steady over the past five years, it is concerning that the number of suicides each year is not falling, MacLean said.

"The distinction often made is look at what's happening with the road toll, which used to be up around those sorts of figures, but it's plummeted," he said.

"Our suicide figures seem to remain stubbornly the same."

- 4 [Lotto million split three ways while Powerball rolls over to \\$7m](#)
- 5 [Families stunned as car rips through yards, smashes fence, ends up upside down, driver allegedly fle](#)
- 6 [DIY dream come true: building consents for low risk projects scrapped](#)
- 7 [As politicians weigh risk of reopening the bubble, a top pandemic expert says he'd happily get on a](#)
- 8 [Coronavirus: Death of Auckland baby sheds light on unreported violence during Covid-19 lockdown](#)
- 9 [It's been a tough week for Simon Bridges - but this isn't tiddlywinks](#)
- 10 [The new mum who spent lockdown fighting cervical cancer](#)

The government, counsellors and key stakeholders needed to continue talking about what needed to be done to change the prevalent nature of suicide in New Zealand, MacLean said.

Suicide needed to be "gently" brought "out of the shadows".

TEEN SUICIDE

Teenagers have always being over represented in suicide statistics, but a leap from 56 to 80 is a trend which MacLean labels as both concerning and baffling.

There was a sense of "bewilderment" among other age groups "as to why they get so desperate that they'd feel a need to end it all."

"From my age group's perspective these are people that have got their whole lives" ahead of them. All that promise snuffed out," MacLean said.

While mental health was not a common factor in youth suicides compared to other age groups, pressure and expectations from parents were a driving force, MacLean said.

It may be that they are feeling pressure to do well in school, or could not find employment, he said.

Just one critical text from a peer or negative comment from a parent could be enough to push a teenager over the edge.

"Sometimes you see a teenager commit suicide and think 'Why on earth, just because they got a ticking off about something'. But often that ticking off by parents has been historically a catalyst - that was the final straw. The kid is told off, storms out of the house and hangs themselves.

"Often the catalyst seems utterly pathetic. You just can't understand it, but if you go a bit further you see there were things going on in their lives."

Texting, cyber bullying and other forms of bullying were problems, as was suicide being glamorised in memorial pages on Facebook or other social media, MacLean said.

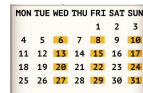
MAORI SUICIDE

As more Maori are taking their own lives, questions are surfacing as to whether a large tangi, or farewell, could be doing more detriment than good.

MacLean said that some leaders within the Maori community were concerned that a large ceremony

top stories in your community

KIIN is giving away pre-pack cooked me...



It has been a challenging few weeks for most of us, some worst than others. This is

My Local Like

Chocola, on Apirana Avenue in Glen Innes in the area by Fruit World and the Dove Hospice Shop. Amazing fresh Mexican food as well

Free firewood

Free firewood available.Kohimarama area. Please pm v me for details.

A dog in Harry Dencey park Freemans B...

This poor thing is sleeping on the ground in the park((I have never had a dog and it's prohibited to have pets in my flat. Maybe

Crime & Safety updates

[Find out more](#)

near auckland region

< 1 of 51 >



Brand New & Loaded With Luxuries

St Heliers, 139d Long Drive



Simon & Glynn
Pritchett

Licensed under the REAA
2008

[find out more](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Advertise with Stuff

and haka could be glamorising suicide.

"I know for Maori it's increasingly of concern because on the one hand there's the strong feeling that you must have a tangi and it's appropriate to have a haka but I know senior people in Maoridom are concerned about whether this is the right way to go.

There was growing concern that celebrating the lives of people who had killed themselves could act as a trigger for other teens to take their own lives.

"It doesn't sound logical but there is a concern that there may be some link. Perhaps if the person is in the pits of despair, think no body cares about them and have no self esteem, that that's one way they can make their mark."

Maori Party MP Te Ururoa Flavell said last year that young suicide victims should be denied tangi and buried at the entrance of cemeteries.

But Pikiaro Runanga project leader Michael Naera, who organised a national hui into Maori suicide last year, says a tangi still needs to be held as it is just as much for the dead as it is for the living.

"We need to return to our traditional practice. We don't concentrate on issues...but on the death and farewelling them," he said.

But the haka would be a haka against suicide, he said. "It sends out a message to our people."

Flavell made his comments last year following a spurt of deaths in Kawerau, Bay of Plenty, where he said 10 teenagers had claimed their lives within 12 months.

[national](#)
driving the trend.

"There are a lot of things occurring in the Maori community that the mainstream isn't aware of. For example, accessing mental health services. Research shows Maori are poorer in accessing those services," he said.

Drugs, alcohol and gambling were also factors, he said.

CHRISTCHURCH

While suicide rates in the Christchurch region have risen, the figures for the year prior were unusually low due to the aftermath of the February 22 earthquake.

There were 67 suicides in Christchurch during 2010/2011 and 81 between July 2011 to June 2012.

Suicide rates often fell in the wake of a natural disaster. They fell in Victoria, Australia, after the floods and fires, and they naturally fell in Christchurch after the February 22 earthquake last year.

"While I suppose we were nervously expecting what we're seeing, there was always hope that it wouldn't be that way," MacLean said.

The number of suicides each month plummeted after the quake - ranging from one in February to six in August.

However, 14 people took their lives in January, bringing the annual total to above the average of 71.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployed people are increasingly taking their lives, a trend which reflects the current global financial crisis, MacLean said.

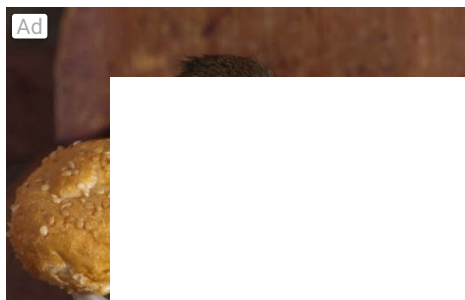
While suicide statistics for employed people have fallen from 232 in 2007/08 to 195 in the latest year, those for unemployed people have increased from 140 to 155 for the same period.

"We saw the same thing in the 80s and 90s...Jobs were being swept away in a way we'd never really seen since the Great Depression, and the teen suicide rate went up then too."

It was an era of "turmoil", and was not dissimilar to what's going on now.

"You sense there's a similar thing going on now with the global financial crisis. It's hard for young people to get jobs now," MacLean said.

Stuff



Do This
New ultras
roaches, et



News delivered to home Ad
Trusted news has never been so important
Subscribe to your local newsp

promoted