Victorian COVID-19 Surveillance Report

Weekly report 22 March 2024

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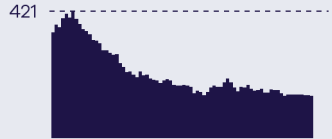
VICTORIA State Government | Department of Health

Epidemiological Summary

Current indicators show low levels of COVID-19 activity in Victoria.

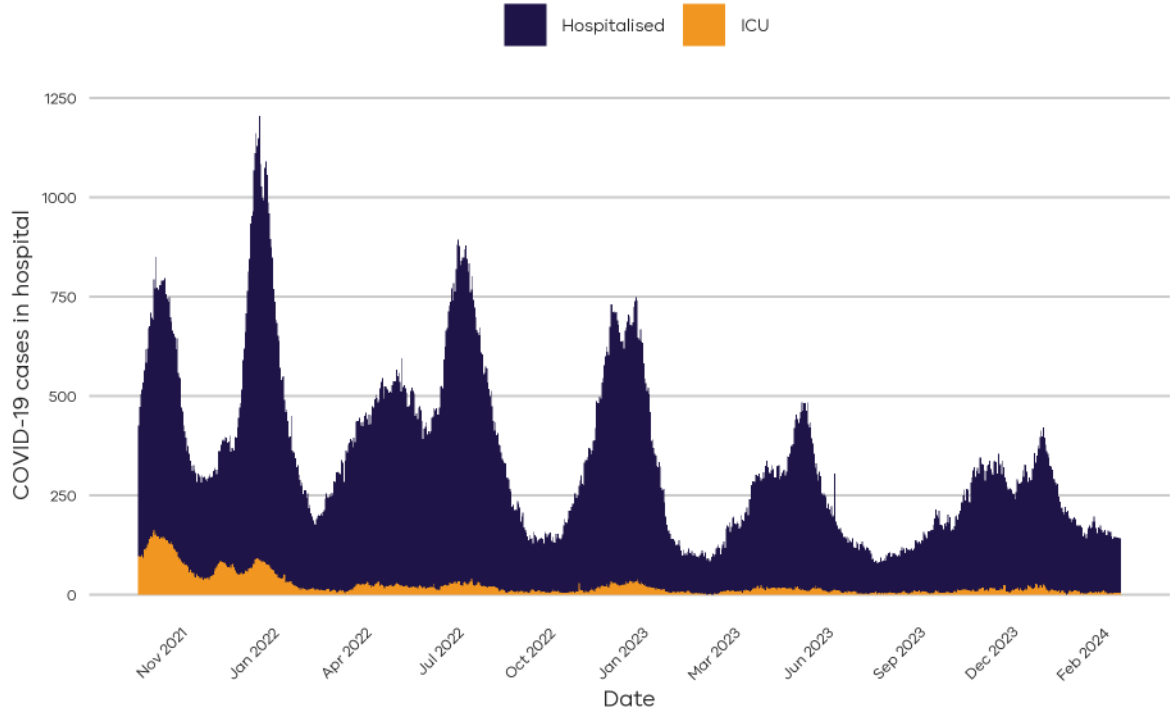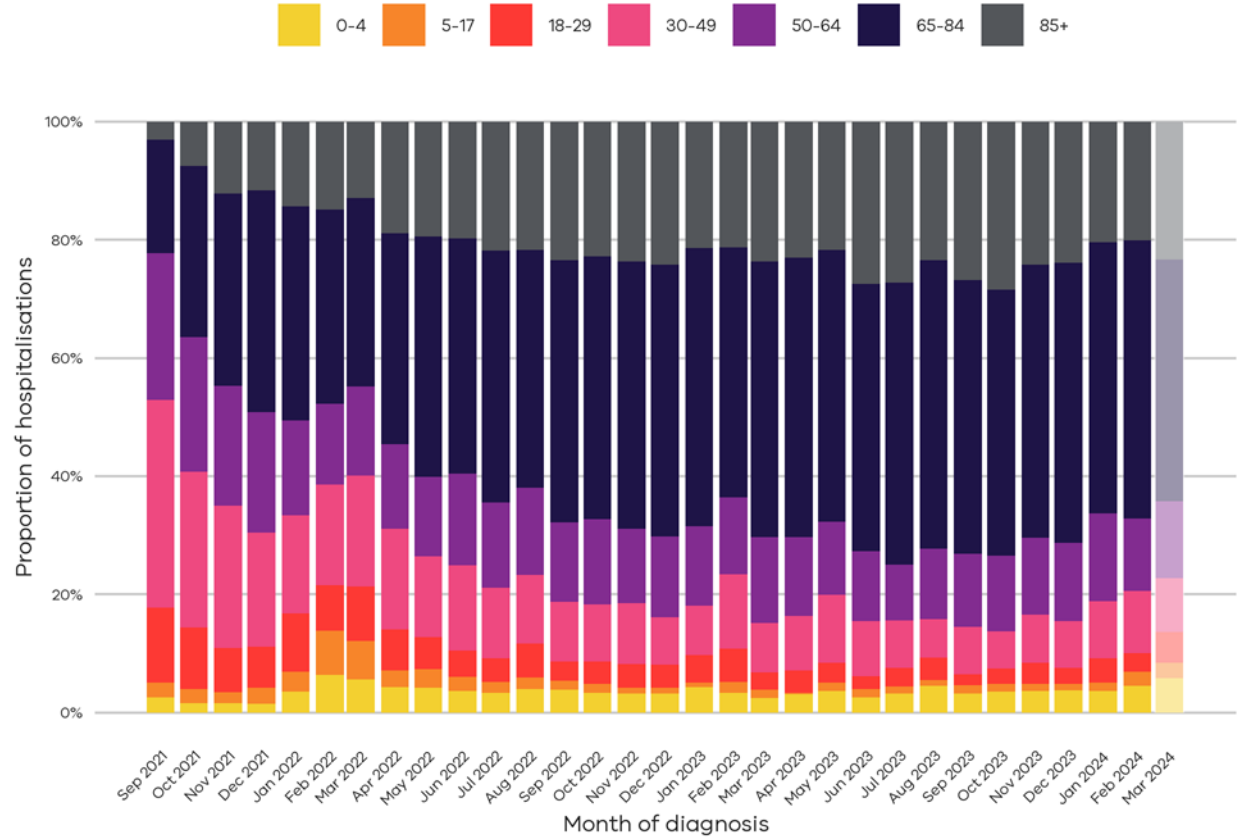| Daily numbers last 12 weeks	
421 *(bar chart)*	**The number of people in hospital with COVID-19 decreased in the week ending 12 March 2024.** The 7-day average was 144, compared to 156 the week before. The **7-day average of ICU patients has increased in the same week** (5 to 6).
(bar chart)	**The latest quantitative wastewater measures indicate there are low SARS-CoV-2 viral loads in Victorian wastewater** in both metropolitan and regional catchments relative to the peak in early January, with a small increase in the most recent measurements. Increasing levels of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater suggest increasing prevalence of COVID-19 infections in the community. *(Plot shows metro median relative quantitative levels of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater)*
11 *(bar chart)*	**Deaths in the most recent 28-day period (07/02/2024 – 05/03/2024) have declined compared to the prior 28-day period 10/01/2024– 06/02/2024), with a current 28-day total of 75**. Increases and decreases in the reporting of deaths attributable to COVID-19 tend to lag waves of infections and hospitalisations by several weeks.
(virus icon)	Following rapid growth in early December, **JN.1 (a sublineage of BA.2.86) remains the dominant variant in Victorian wastewater samples** at approximately 97% in the most recent samples. This is the first time a single subvariant has been dominant in Victoria since BA.5 in 2022.

COVID Hospitalisations

Daily COVID-19 cases, in hospital and ICU
Data until 12 March 2024

Legend: Hospitalised, ICU

Y-axis: COVID-19 cases in hospital (0, 250, 500, 750, 1000, 1250)
X-axis: Date (Nov 2021, Jan 2022, Apr 2022, Jul 2022, Oct 2022, Jan 2023, Mar 2023, Jun 2023, Sep 2023, Dec 2023, Feb 2024)

Data source: Critical Health Resource Information System (CHRIS)

COVID-19 hospitalisations by age
Data until 19 March 2024

Legend: 0-4, 5-17, 18-29, 30-49, 50-64, 65-84, 85+

Y-axis: Proportion of hospitalisations (0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%)
X-axis: Month of diagnosis (Sep 2021 ... Mar 2024)

Data source: TREVI, VICNISS
Note: Faded area includes current month where data is incomplete

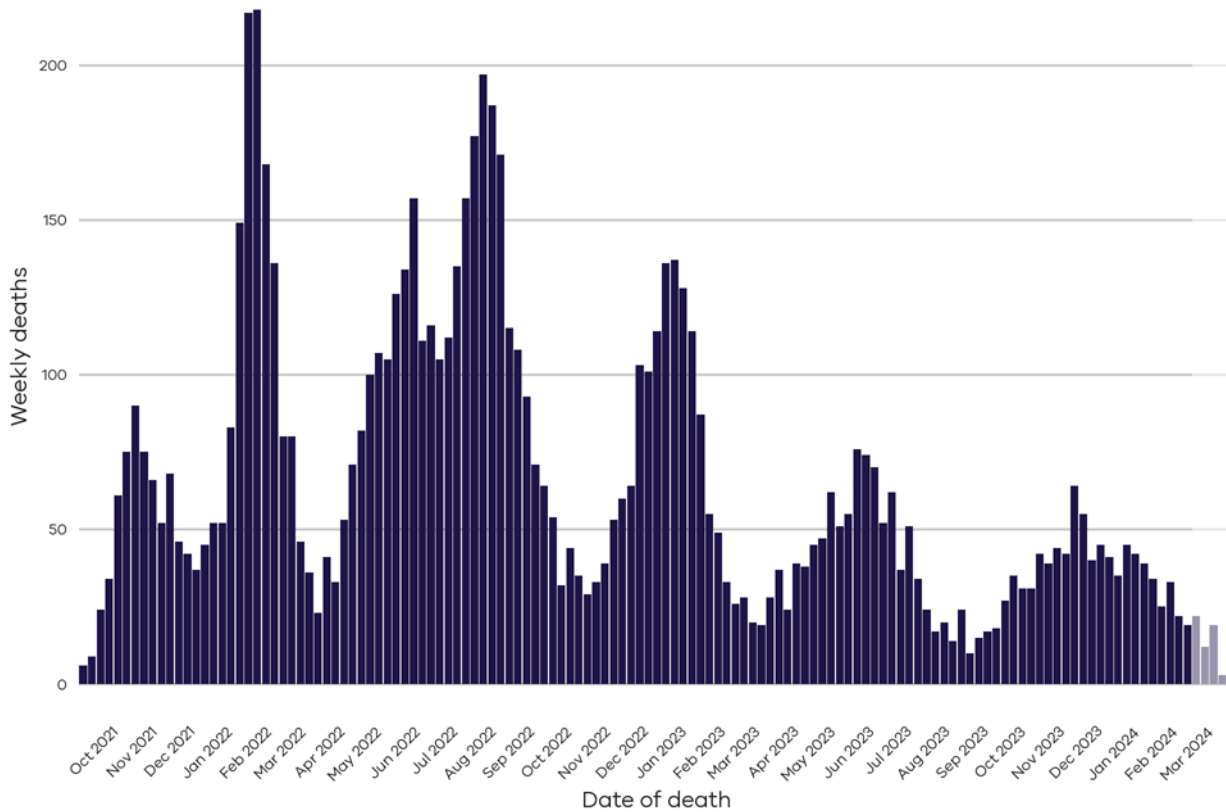This graph shows data back to September 2021 when hospitalisations were increasing during the Delta variant wave.
Hospitalisations represent the number of COVID-19 positive patients in hospital on a given day.
Please note that due to data availability, hospitalised case data is only to 12 March 2024.
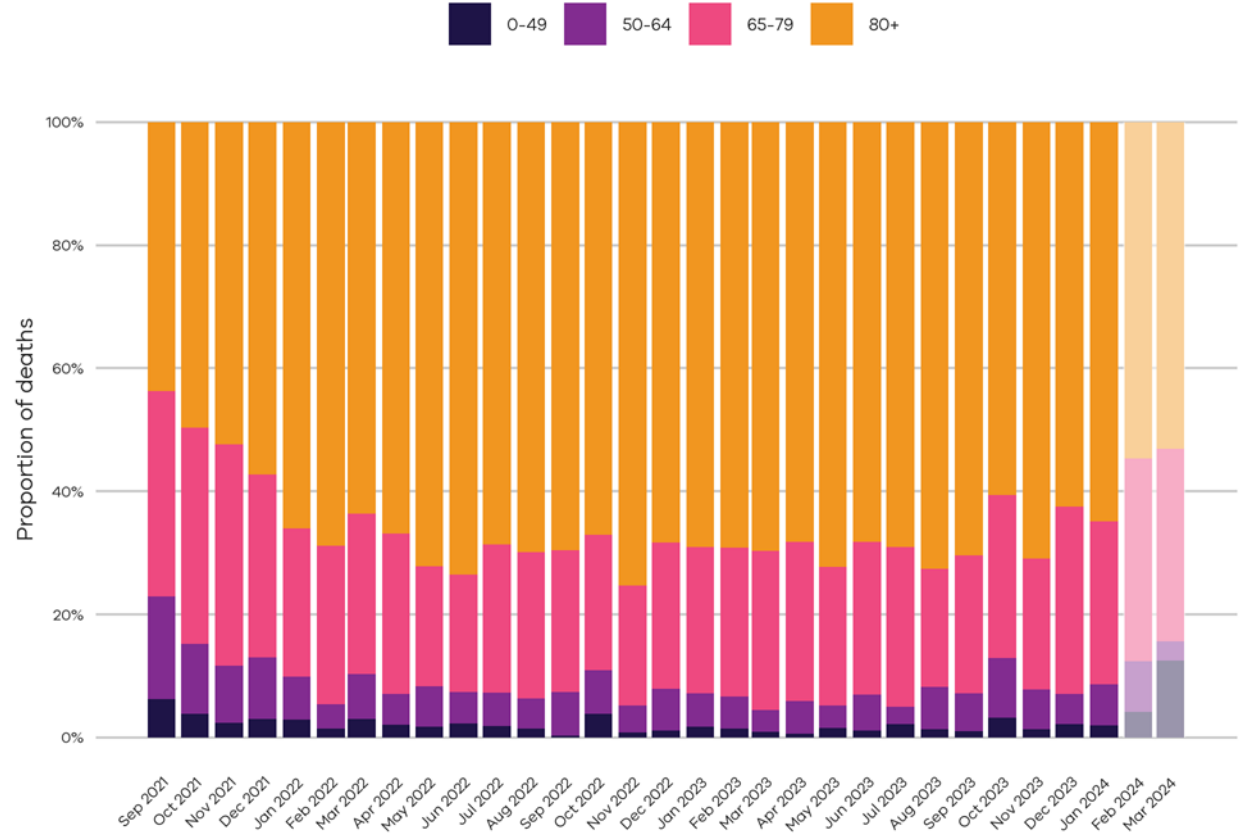
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COVID Mortality

Weekly COVID-19 deaths
Data until 19 March 2024

Data source: TREVI
Note: Faded area includes last 4 weeks where data is incomplete

COVID-19 deaths by age
Data until 19 March 2024
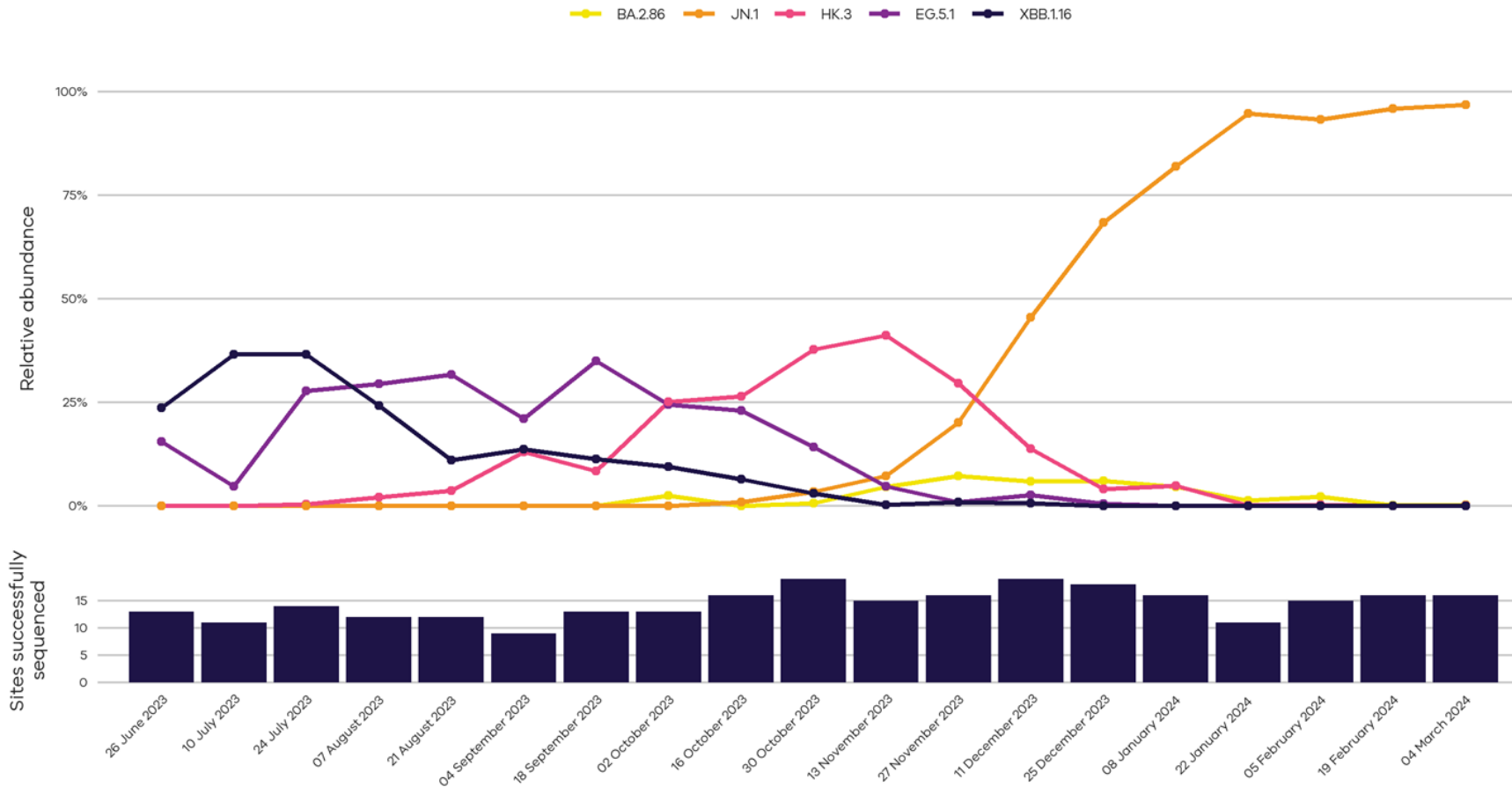
0-49 | 50-64 | 65-79 | 80+

Data source: TREVI
Note: Faded area includes last 4 weeks where data is incomplete

Date is based on date of death, not date of when each death was reported. This applies to all death metrics in the report unless stated otherwise.

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Wastewater surveillance: variant trends in Victoria

Variant trends in wastewater
Latest retrieval 07 March 2024

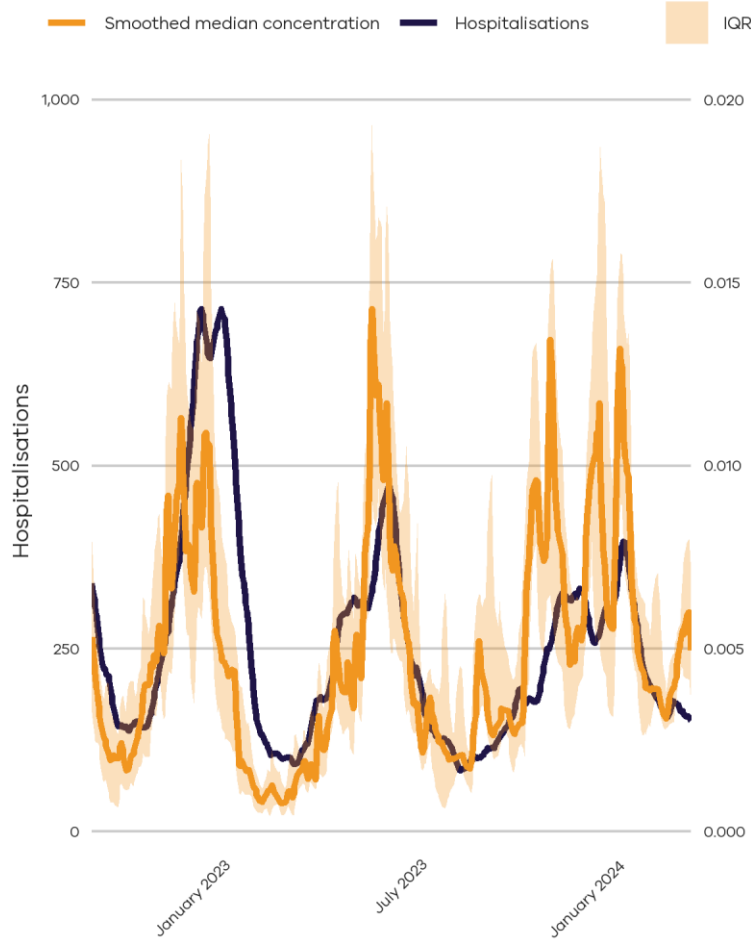Legend: BA.2.86 · JN.1 · HK.3 · EG.5.1 · XBB.1.16

Analysis of wastewater samples can help us understand which SARS-CoV-2 variants are currently circulating in Victoria.

In the past there have been waves of infections and hospitalisations when a new variant or subvariant has spread quickly relative to the others.
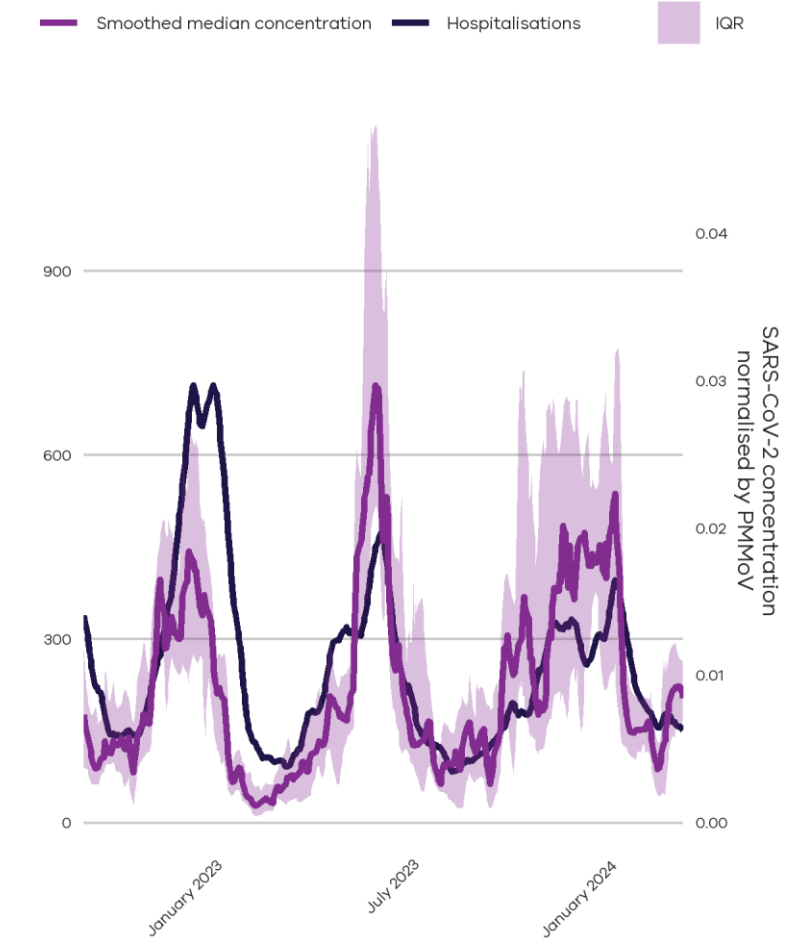
There are a number of closely related sublineages circulating in Victoria. Only the most detected variants have been displayed here.

Quantitative Wastewater Levels

Metro Melbourne
Wastewater data until 07 March 2024

Regional Victoria

Quantitative wastewater sampling and 7-day average hospitalisations provide insights into changes in prevalence and COVID-19 wave detection.

These charts show the median SARS-CoV-2 wastewater viral loads with hospitalisations over time, which show a close relationship.
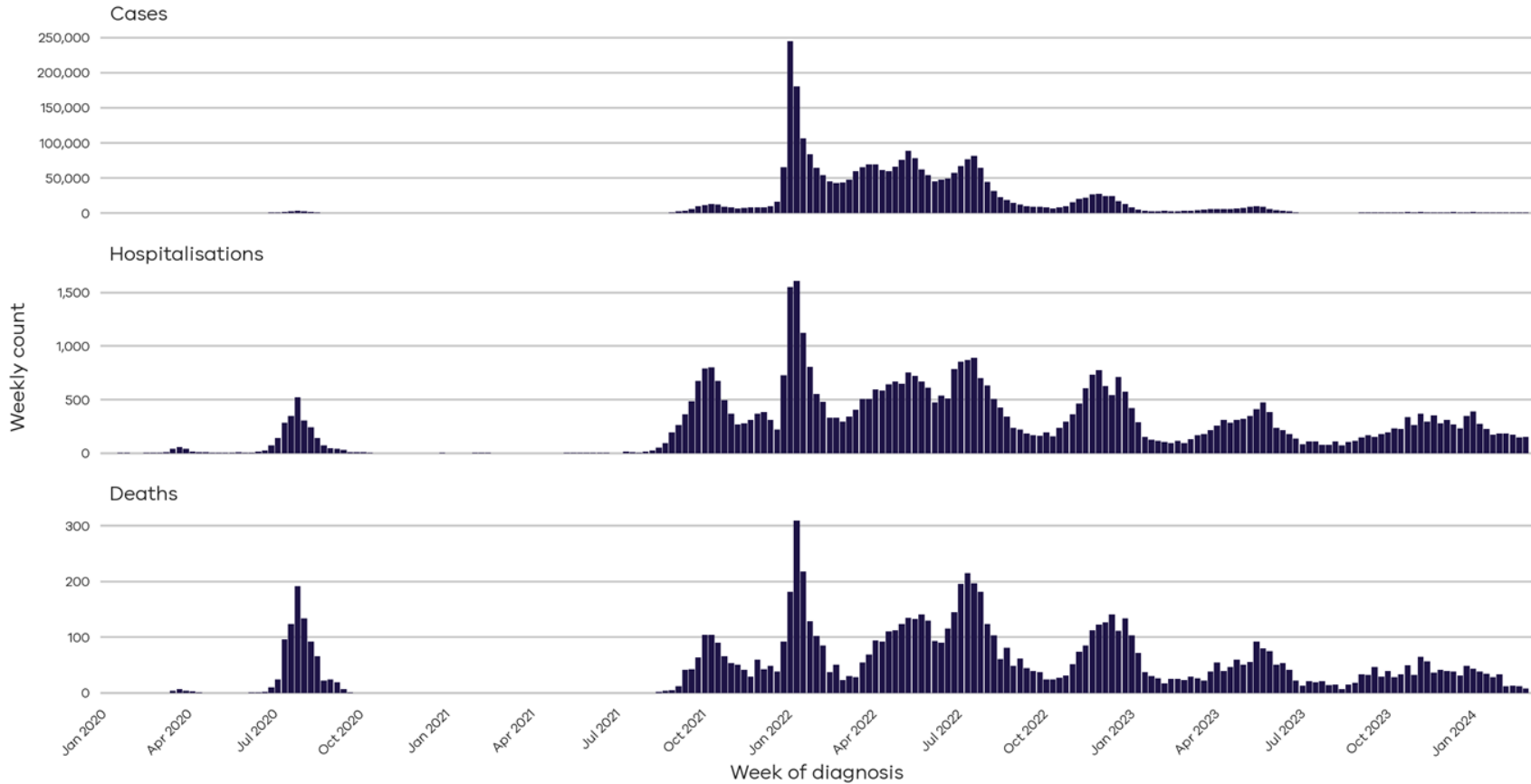
Quantitative SARS-CoV-2 levels are normalised by PMMoV (a non-pathogenic virus that is shed consistently by the population) and smoothed over the read period to account for rainfall, population movements and catchment size.

Please note that recent estimates have been revised upwards. A new mutation present in the JN.1 variant was affecting some of the measurements. In this report, the affected measurements have been removed.

Appendix

COVID-19 Historical Data

Epidemic curve of weekly COVID-19 metrics
Data until 12 March 2024

Data source: TREVI

Cases are reported according to the definitions given in the Coronavirus (COVID-19) CDNA National Guidelines for Public Health Units. Where multiple positive test results are received for the same person within 35 days of the initial test result they are counted as a single case. **As of 30 June 2023, probable cases are not collected by the Victorian Department of Health, case counts since this date reflect cases with a positive PCR test only.**

COVID-19 Hospitalisations represent the number of active COVID-19 patients in hospital on a given day. This is reported in two ways:

- as reported by Victorian hospitals to the Critical Health Resource Information Service (CHRIS) as aggregated data.

- as reported to the Victorian Nosocomial Infection Surveillance System (VICNISS) at case level. Totals using demographic breakdowns from VICNISS may differ from totals using the aggregated values from CHRIS.

COVID-19 deaths are counted according to the Victorian surveillance definition, including all deaths reported in the Victorian Deaths Index (VDI) with COVID-19 listed as a primary or contributing cause of death on the medical death certificate, or a death within 35 days of diagnosis, excluding clearly unrelated causes such as trauma. Deaths may be reported retrospectively as the time between death, submission of the data to VDI and linkage to case data may vary.