

---

## COVID19 SECOND WAVE

---

## MODELLING MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS VICTORIA

---



---

### KEY POINTS

---

1. Orygen has undertaken dynamic systems modelling of the Victorian population across all ages (4-84 years) as well as specifically the 12-25 year old age group to understand and predict the potential scale of the mental health impacts resulting from the COVID19 pandemic (the 'second wave').
2. Modelling based on psychological distress resulting from the impact of the COVID19 pandemic indicates that:
  - An **additional** 370,000 Victorians aged 4-84 years (including 82,000 young people aged 12-25 years) could be experiencing common mental health disorders at the peak of the COVID19 mental health curve in mid-2023 than would otherwise have been expected (i.e. base levels) (**Figure 1 and 2**).
  - This represents a 29.6 per cent increase on predicted base levels for 4-84 year olds and a **32.3 per cent** increase for 12-25 year olds.
  - The attributable increase in mental health disorders related to COVID19 will be predominantly within areas of Victoria, with small pockets in some regional areas (**Figure 3 and 4**).

---

### CONTEXT

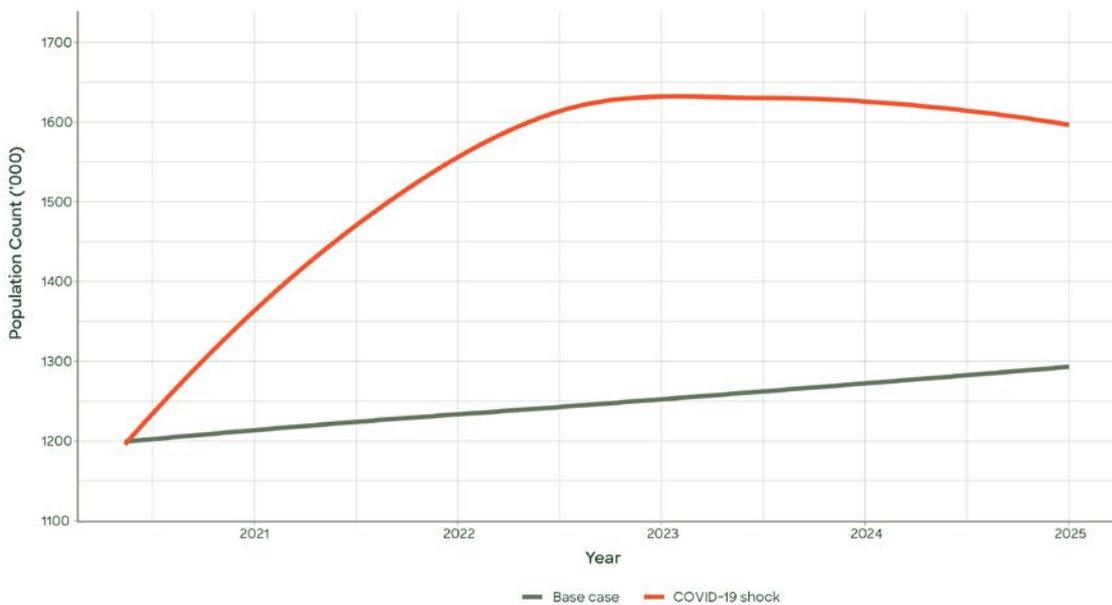
---

3. Individuals experiencing mental illness and mental ill-health presenting to mental health services for care and treatment has declined substantially during the pandemic. While a proportion will have taken up telehealth and/or other online options during this period, Orygen is concerned for the significant number who have not.
4. As restrictions ease, the system must be equipped with the capacity to respond to the expected influx in demand for services. This demand will be driven by both:
  - **an increased number of people who will be experiencing poor mental health** as a result of the physical distancing, loss of workforce participation and educational disengagement triggered by the measures put in place as a response to the pandemic; and
  - **re-presentations from existing service users who may be at a heightened state of distress/ experiencing exacerbated symptoms** as a result of: a) discontinued treatment or b) being triggered by the experience of the pandemic, including those with PTSD, eating disorders, borderline personality disorder, mood disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and psychosis.
5. In the longer term, educational disruption and disengagement, loss of employment, financial stress, housing stress and reduced wellbeing will have a significant impact on population mental health. It is well documented that these social and economic factors increase the risk of mental illness and suicide in our community.

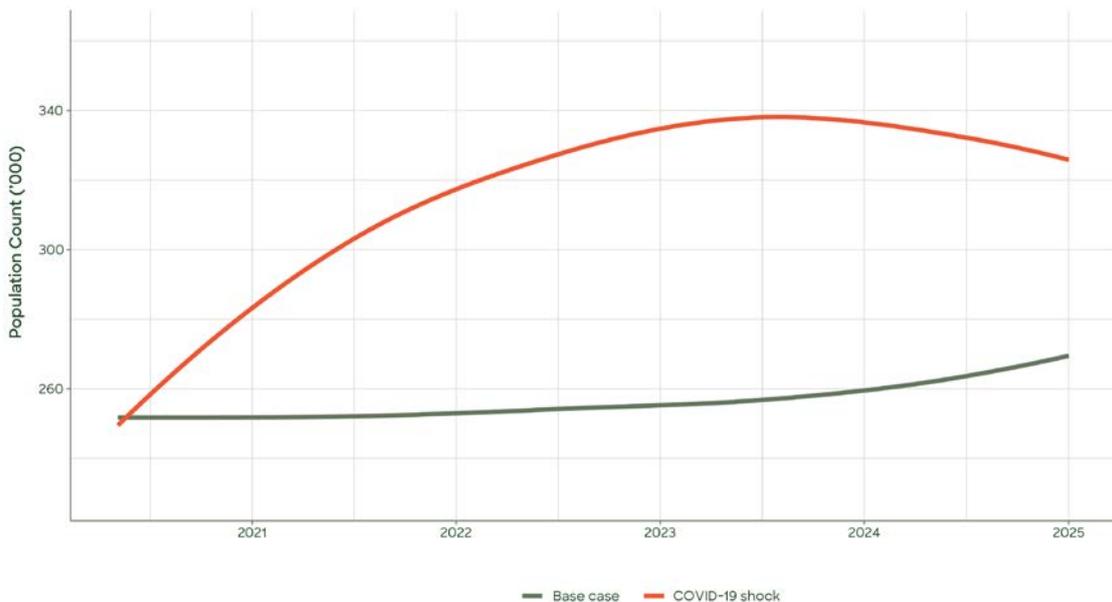
6. Young people will be disproportionately impacted by the COVID19 pandemic, particularly in the coming months and years. They make up a large proportion of the casual workforce, particularly in retail and hospitality, sectors that have been hardest hit.
7. There is a need to ensure we have a system of care in place across Victoria to effectively respond. Continued effective modelling, and ongoing data monitoring and research must also be factored in as part of the mental health response plan from this stage onwards.

**FIGURES: COVID19 ATTRIBUTABLE INCREASE IN COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS**

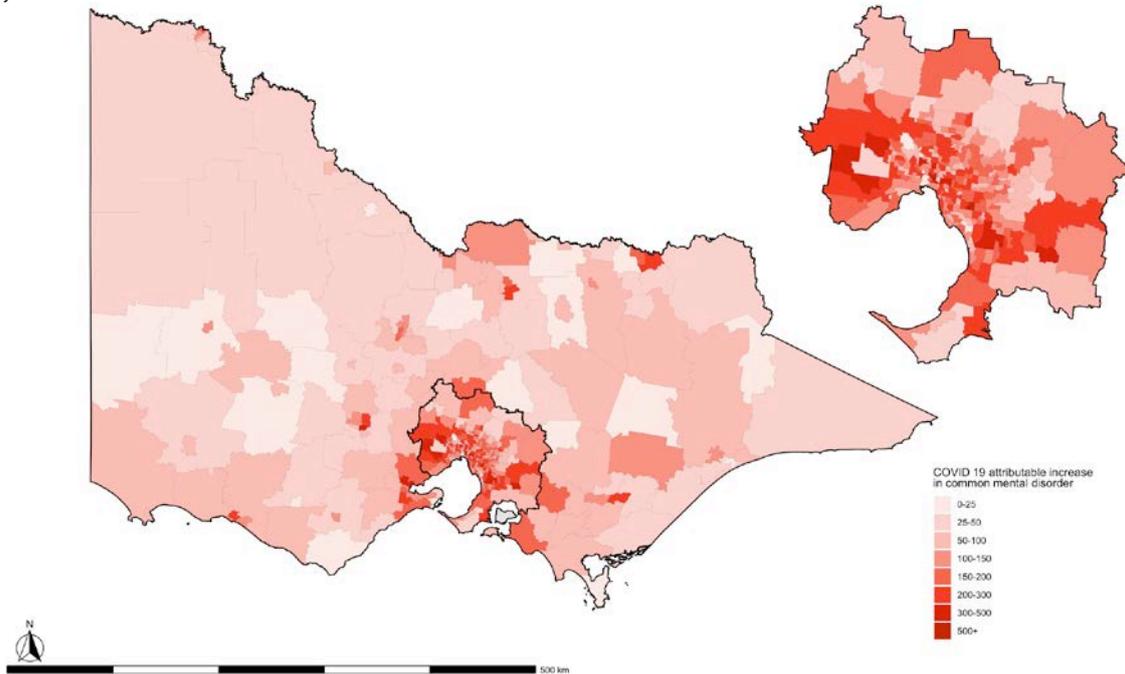
**Figure 1: COVID19 attributable increase in common mental disorders by population (4-84 year olds)**



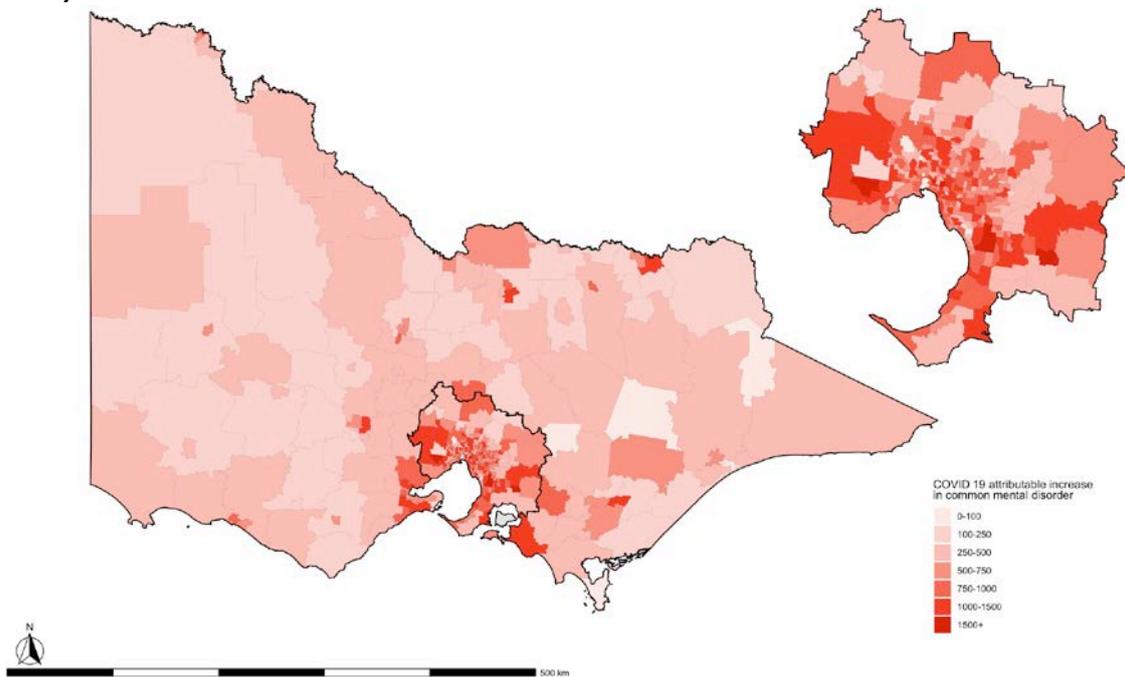
**Figure 2 COVID19 attributable increase in common mental disorders by population (12-25 year olds)**



**Figure 3: COVID19 attributable increase in common mental disorders in 2025 by SA2 areas (12-25 year olds)**



**Figure 4: COVID19 attributable increase in common mental disorders in 2025 by SA2 areas (4-84 year olds)**



*\*Assumptions: a) no change to background prevalence rate to start of this year; and b) assumed impact of COVID19 disruption on prevalence of mental disorders would be in line with that predicted by Sydney model (Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney) for psychological distress.*

*\*This modelling does not consider state and federal government policy responses and interventions to COVID19 to date that have aimed to mitigate against negative social, economic and health impacts of the pandemic.*

## MORE INFORMATION

Professor Pat McGorry AO

Executive Director, Orygen

[Pat.mcgorry@orygen.org.au](mailto:Pat.mcgorry@orygen.org.au)

0418 173 524