



Report created on 24 September 2023

Fortnightly Respiratory Surveillance Report

Fortnightly Respiratory Surveillance Report, Tasmania

Public Health Services

Report for the epidemiological fortnight ending 24 September 2023

The Fortnightly Respiratory Surveillance Report provides a current overview of the epidemiology of COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and other circulating respiratory viruses in Tasmania. The focus of this report is on COVID-19, influenza and RSV cases notified to Public Health Services since 1 January 2023.

This report describes trends in community-based influenza-like illness, case notifications, case rates per 1,000 people, PCR testing, hospitalisations and deaths, whole genome sequencing and virology. It presents epidemiological curves to display the magnitude and distribution of cases over time; graphs to monitor PCR testing, and rates per 1,000 people by region of residence and age group; tables to examine trends in weekly case notifications and rates per 1,000 people by region of residence, age group and local government area (LGA); tables to monitor trends in weekly PCR testing for other respiratory pathogens tested in Tasmania; tables to examine weekly hospital admissions and deaths in COVID-19 cases; and tables to monitor weekly trends regarding whole genome sequencing of COVID-19 and the virology of influenza.

Data sources: The Fortnightly Respiratory Surveillance Report consolidates data from a range of sources to provide an understanding of what is happening in the community. These data include pathology results, hospital administrative data, death registrations and community surveys. Data in this report are collected for surveillance purposes and are indicative of trends. Data should not be compared between reports as data for previous weeks are updated as new information becomes available.

Caveats to the data: Information presented in this report is based on data available in the Tasmanian Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (TNDSS) at the time of reporting and is subject to change. Case notifications are received daily from public and private laboratories in Tasmania. The weekly number of cases reported to Public Health Services underestimates the true number of new infections in the community.

Reporting week is the epidemiological week from Monday to Sunday. Data are presented for the week ending on the date shown in the column header (e.g., data for the week of 20 March to 26 March have the column header "26March2023"). Rates presented are calculated as the number of reported cases per 1,000 people per week and the number of PCR tests performed per 1,000 people per week.

Population estimates are calculated using population data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The data in this report are calculated using the most recent population data, for 30 June 2021, which was released on 26 July 2022.

Information regarding testing of respiratory viruses (other than SARS-CoV-2) and whole genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 are received a week following the data collection cut-off date hence the 7-day lag in reporting.

Hospitalisations for cases with COVID-19 are reported daily from public and private hospitals in Tasmania and include all individuals with COVID-19 admitted to hospital. Hospital admissions with COVID-19 also include admissions whereby COVID-19 was not the primary reason for admission (i.e. incidental diagnosis), and cases diagnosed with COVID-19 after admission (i.e. potentially hospital-acquired infections).

Key messages

Activity

Influenza-like illness

The prevalence of reported influenza-like-illness (ILI; fever and cough) in the community has been fluctuating in recent weeks, but mostly remained below the seasonal peak observed in May through to July (Figure 1). ILI may be due to symptoms of various infections including influenza, COVID-19 and other respiratory infections such as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and rhinovirus.

COVID-19

- The percentage of PCR tests positive for COVID-19 was 2% in the week ending 24 September 2023, and remained substantially lower than positivity rates observed from April to late May (Figure 2).
- The number of reported COVID-19 cases state-wide has remained low following a minor peak in the current wave in May. In recent weeks notifications have remained relatively stable, with 262 and 264 cases notified in the weeks ending 17 September 2023 and 24 September 2023 (Table 1), following a small increase during August (Figure 3).
- From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, a total of 23,529 COVID-19 cases were notified in Tasmania. Of these total cases, 6,188 cases (26%) resided in the North, 4,271 cases (18%) resided in the North-West, and 12,719 cases (54%) resided in the South (Table 1).
- In recent weeks the notification rates of COVID-19 remained less than 1 per 1,000 people in almost all LGAs. In the week ending 24 September 2023, the highest number of cases were reported from the Clarence, Launceston, and Hobart LGAs. The notification rate was highest in the South (Tables 1 and 2).
- The trends indicate stable and low COVID-19 activity.

Influenza

- In the week ending 17 September 2023, the percentage of PCR tests positive for influenza has decreased to 0.7%, similar to PCR positivity observed before a seasonal increase from early May to mid-September (Figure 6).
- The number of influenza notifications continued to decrease this reporting fortnight; with 48 and 42 cases notified in the weeks ending 17 September 2023 and 24 September 2023 respectively (Table 3).
- From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, a total of 3,052 influenza cases were reported in Tasmanian residents. Of these, 1,143 cases (37%) resided in the North, 477 cases (16%) resided in the North-West, and 1,431 cases (47%) resided in the South (Table 3).
- In recent weeks, the weekly notification rates of influenza were less than 0.5 per 1,000 people in all LGAs. In the week ending 24 September 2023, the highest number of influenza cases was reported in the Launceston LGA. The notification rates were similar in all regions (Table 3, 4).
- Overall, these trends indicate some ongoing modest seasonal influenza activity that has substantially declined compared to higher activity from May to early August.

RSV

- In the week ending 17 September 2023, the percentage of PCR tests positive for RSV was 3.7%, less than the peak of 5.5% observed in late July but remains relatively elevated since an increase in mid-May (Figure 10).

- The number of reported RSV cases has declined slowly, since a peak in June; there were 76 and 47 cases notified in the weeks ending 17 September 2023 and 24 September 2023, respectively (Table 5).
- From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, a total of 1,882 RSV cases were reported in Tasmanian residents. Of these, 777 cases (41%) resided in the North, 250 cases (13%) resided in the North-West, and 854 cases (45%) resided in the South (Table 5).
- In recent weeks, notification rates of RSV remained less than 0.5 per 1,000 people in all LGAs. In the week ending 24 September 2023, the highest number of RSV cases was reported in the Launceston LGA. The notification rates were similar in all regions (Table 5, 6).
- Overall, these trends indicate ongoing seasonal RSV activity, lower than a peak in June.

Other respiratory pathogens

- In recent weeks, infections with Rhinovirus, Parainfluenza virus, Adenovirus and Metapneumovirus have been diagnosed relatively frequently by respiratory pathogen testing in two major laboratories in Tasmania.

Severity

COVID-19

- From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, 1,245 COVID-19 cases were admitted to hospital, 39 cases were admitted to ICU and 79 cases died where COVID-19 caused or contributed to the death (Table 8).
- In recent weeks, COVID-19 hospitalisations have remained relatively stable, while ICU admissions and deaths remained uncommon. In the week ending 24 September 2023, 12 cases were admitted in hospital with COVID-19, and there were no reports of ICU admission or death related to COVID-19 (Table 8).

Age distribution

COVID-19

- From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, adults aged 80 years and older had the highest cumulative COVID-19 notification rates at 74 cases per 1,000 people, followed by adults aged 65 to 79 years at 50 per 1,000 people (Table 1).
- COVID-19 case notification rates remain stable in all age groups except those aged 80 years and older, since early June. There was an increase in COVID-19 notification rates in those aged 80 years and older through late August to early September (Figure 5).
- In the week ending 24 September 2023, COVID-19 notification rates were similar in most adult age groups, but lower among adults aged less than 40 years, and younger persons (Table 1).
- In the week ending 24 September 2023, adults aged 80 years and older had the highest numbers of COVID-19 related hospital admissions (Table 9).

Influenza

- From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, children and teenagers aged 5 to 17 years had the highest influenza notification rates at 12 cases per 1,000 people, followed by young children aged 0 to 4 years at 9 per 1,000 people (Table 3).
- In the week ending 24 September 2023, influenza notification rates were similar across all age groups (Table 3).

RSV

- From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, children aged 0 to 4 years had the highest RSV notification rates with 26 cases per 1,000 people, followed by adults aged 80 years or older at 8 per 1,000 people (Table 5).

- In the week ending 24 September 2023, the number of reported RSV cases declined in most age groups. The highest incidence continued to be reported in children aged 0 to 4 years at 0.6 per 1,000 people (Table 5).

Virology/genomics

COVID-19

- A range of Omicron subvariants and sub-lineages continue to be detected by whole genome sequencing in Tasmania. In the last four weeks, Omicron Recombinant GL.1 was the most common variant detected through whole genome sequencing in this period, followed by EG.5.1.1 and XBB.1.16.6 among the small number of viruses that were genotyped.

Influenza

- From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, 63% of influenza notifications were Influenza A and 37% were Influenza B. In the last 4 weeks, the relative contribution of influenza B increased, with 49% of isolates Influenza B (Table 11). From 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, of those Influenza A and B isolates subjected to subtyping, the majority were A (H1N1) and B Victoria (Table 12).

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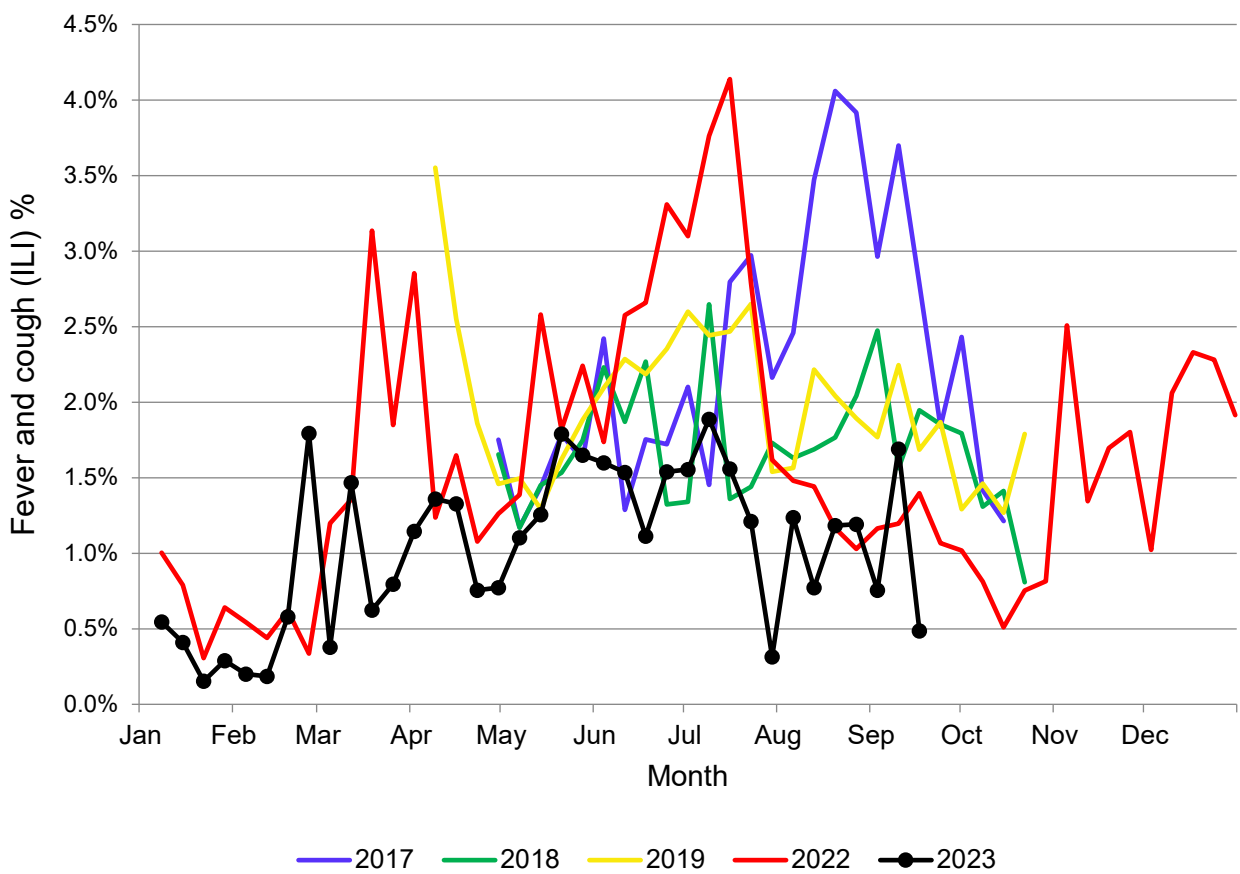
Section 1: Activity

1.1 Community-based surveillance of influenza-like illness

FluTracking is an online health surveillance system used to detect epidemics of influenza across Australia and New Zealand. Participants complete an online survey each week to provide community level influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance, consistent surveillance of influenza activity across all jurisdictions over time, and year to year comparisons of the timing, attack rates and seriousness of influenza in the community. Influenza-like illness may reflect symptoms of influenza, COVID-19 or other respiratory infections such as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) or rhinovirus.

A weekly web-based survey is sent to voluntary participants to capture information on influenza-like illness, including symptoms and indicators of impact and severity. Data presented here relate to new cases (incidence) of influenza-like illness, defined as fever and cough, based on week of onset of symptoms.

More information on joining FluTracking can be found at: <https://info.flutracking.net/>



Data source: FluTracking (age-standardized data), Hunter New England Local Health District, New South Wales Ministry of Health. Note: Information regarding influenza-like illness are received from FluTracking a week following the data collection cut-off date hence the 7-day lag in reporting. Reporting periods for FluTracking vary by year. ILI – Influenza-like illness (reporting fever and cough). 2020 and 2021 have been removed from this figure as incidence of ILI for both these years were less than 1.0 per cent.

Figure 1: Proportion of FluTracking participants in Tasmania reporting influenza-like illness (fever and cough) by week, from 2017 to 17 September 2023.

1.2 COVID-19

1.2.1 Weekly percentage of PCR tests positive for COVID-19

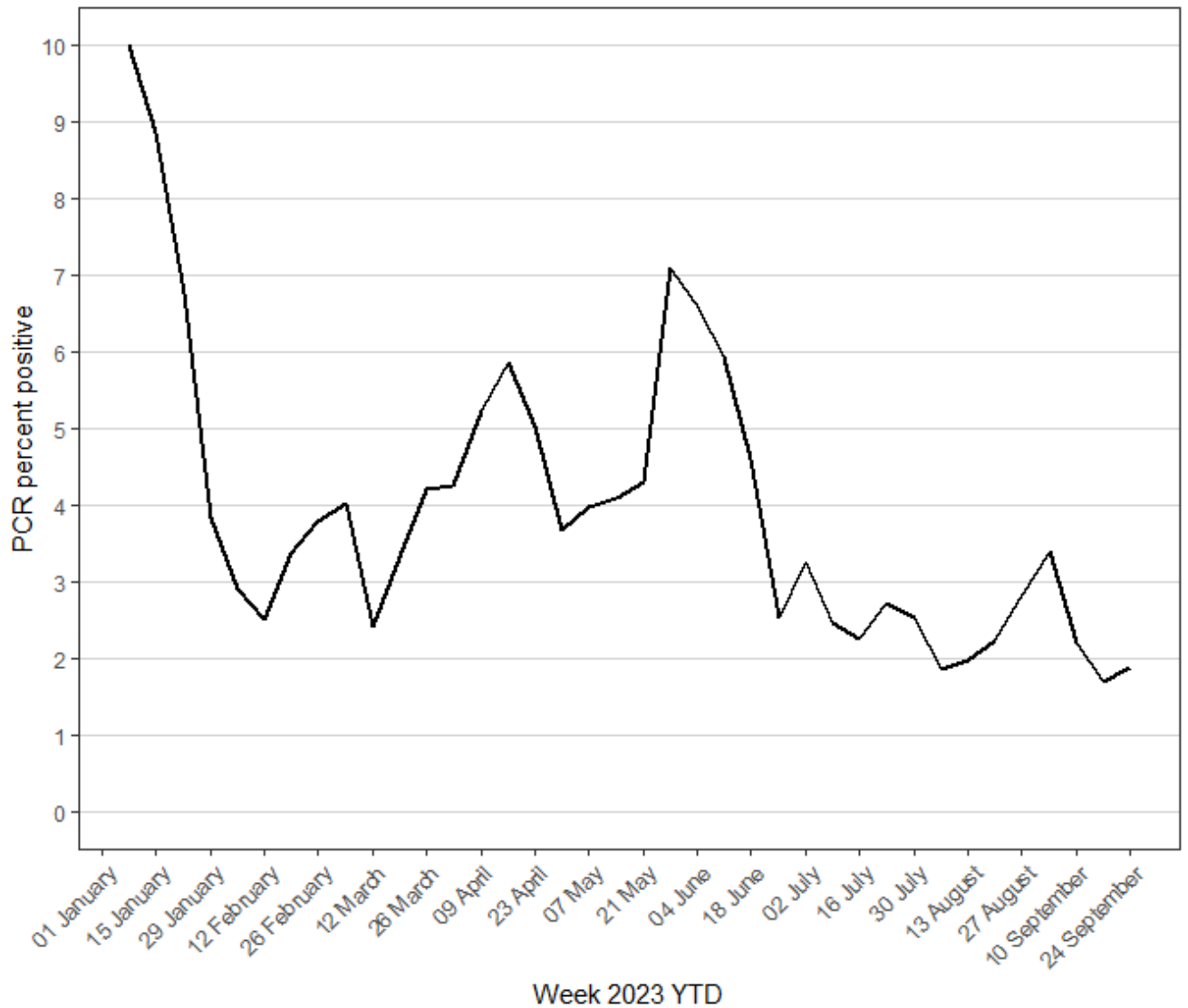


Figure 2: Weekly percentage of PCR tests positive for COVID-19 in Tasmania from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023.

1.2.2 Number of COVID-19 cases notified per week

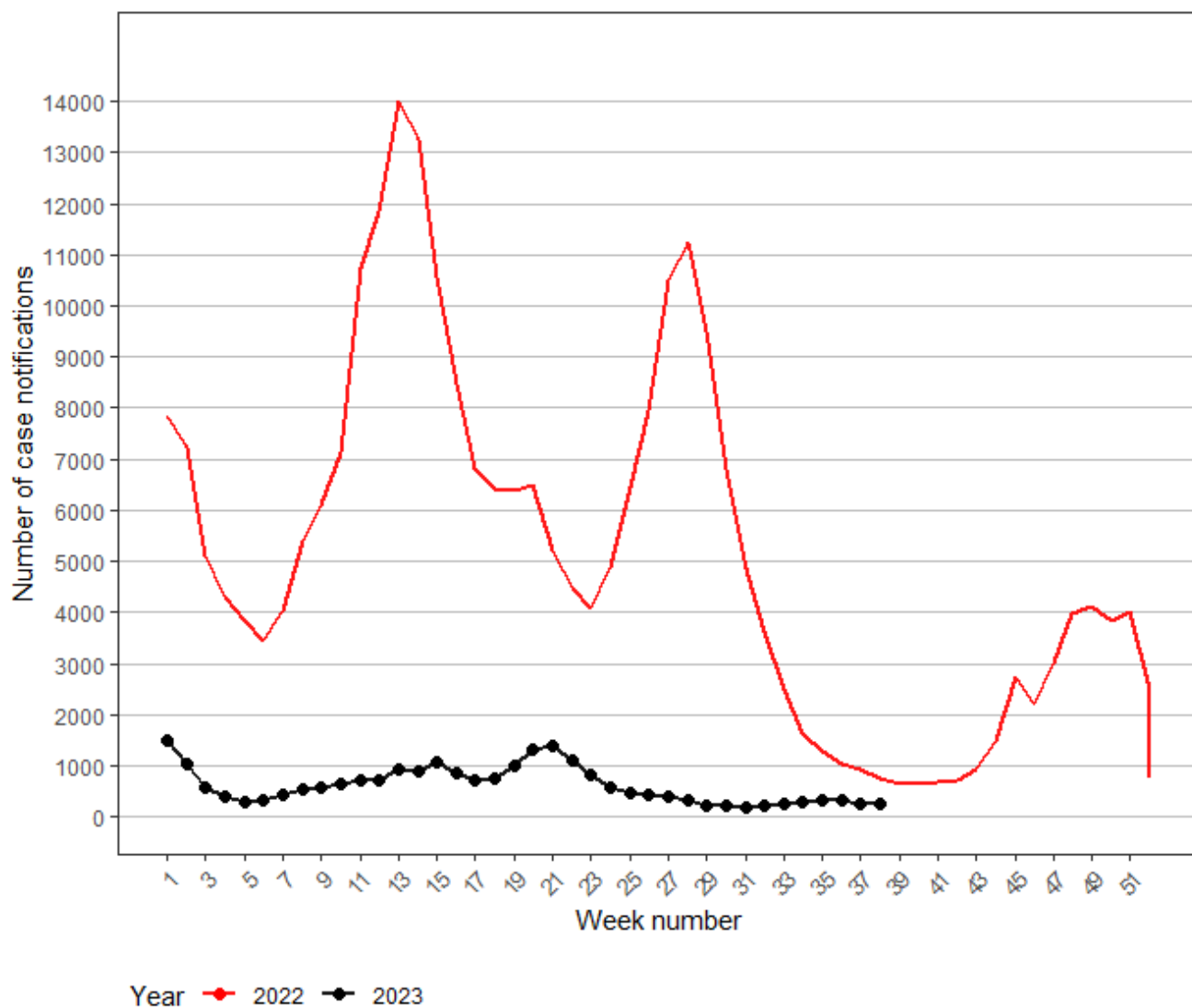


Figure 3: Number of COVID-19 cases in Tasmania notified per week from 1 January 2022 to 24 September 2023.

1.2.3 Weekly COVID-19 case numbers and the number of cases per 1,000 people, by region of residence and age group.

Table 1: COVID-19 cases and number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) per week notified in Tasmania for each of the last four weeks, and total number and overall number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by region of residence and age group.

Region of Residence	03Sep2023		10Sep2023		17Sep2023		24Sep2023		Total Since 1 January 2023	
	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Total Cases	Cumulative prevalence YTD
North	64	0.4	58	0.4	49	0.3	58	0.4	6188	39.9
North-West	40	0.3	29	0.2	35	0.3	34	0.3	4271	35.9
South	219	0.7	233	0.8	176	0.6	172	0.6	12719	43.3
Unknown Region	0	-	2	-	2	-	0	-	351	-
Age Group										
0-4	8	0.3	11	0.4	13	0.4	6	0.2	662	22.6
5-17	28	0.3	33	0.4	23	0.3	18	0.2	2681	32.2
18-39	78	0.6	72	0.5	73	0.5	53	0.4	6068	43.0
40-64	110	0.6	116	0.7	97	0.6	108	0.6	8155	47.1
65-79	61	0.7	48	0.6	44	0.5	59	0.7	4078	49.8
80 and over	38	1.5	42	1.7	12	0.5	20	0.8	1883	74.4
Unknown Age	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	-
Total	323	0.6	322	0.6	262	0.5	264	0.5	23529	41.4

1.2.4 Weekly number of COVID-19 cases per 1,000 people notified since 1 January 2023, by region of residence.

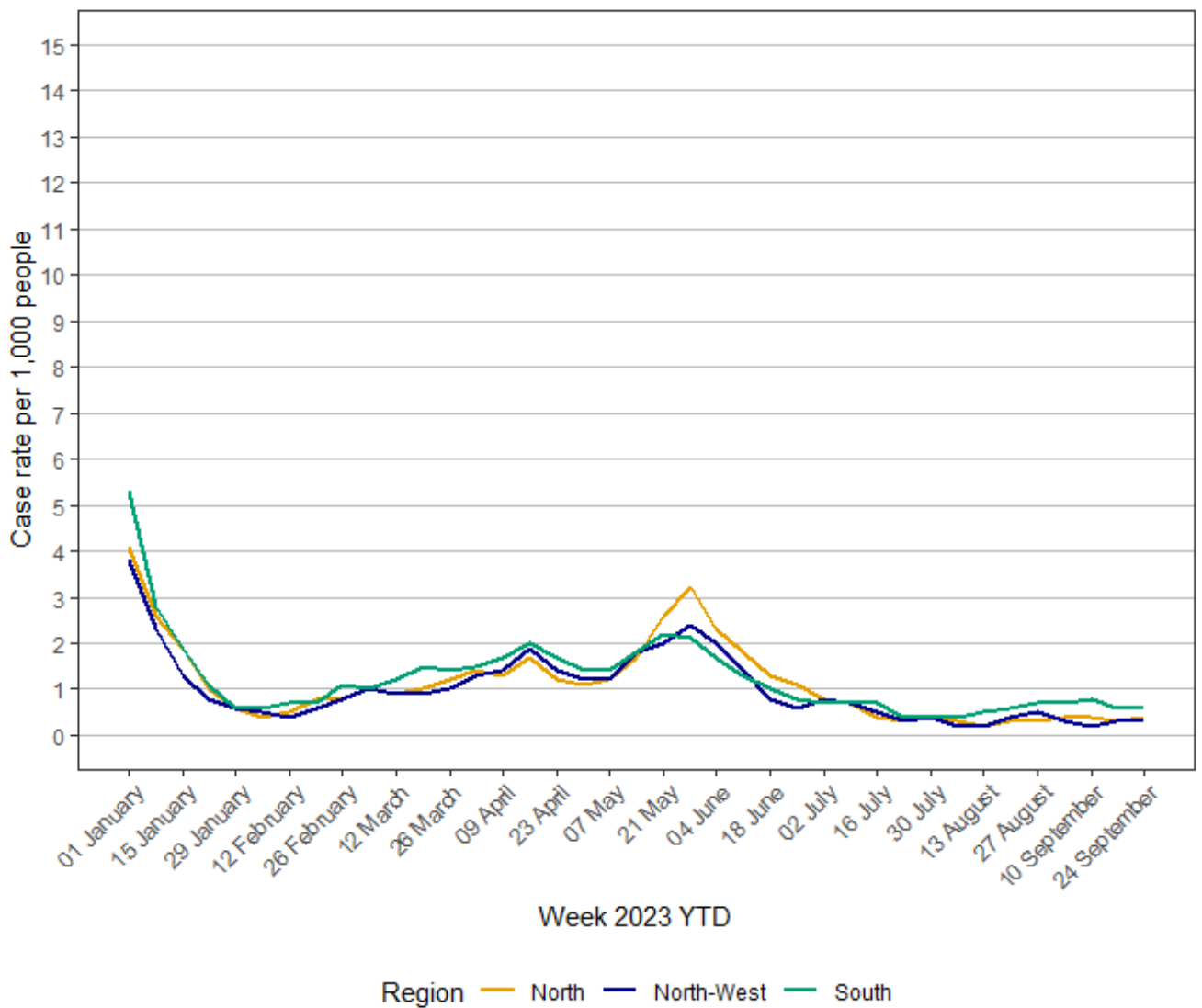


Figure 4: Weekly number of COVID-19 cases per 1000 people (rate) notified in Tasmania from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by region of residence.

1.2.5 Weekly number of COVID-19 cases per 1,000 people notified since 1 January 2023, by age group.

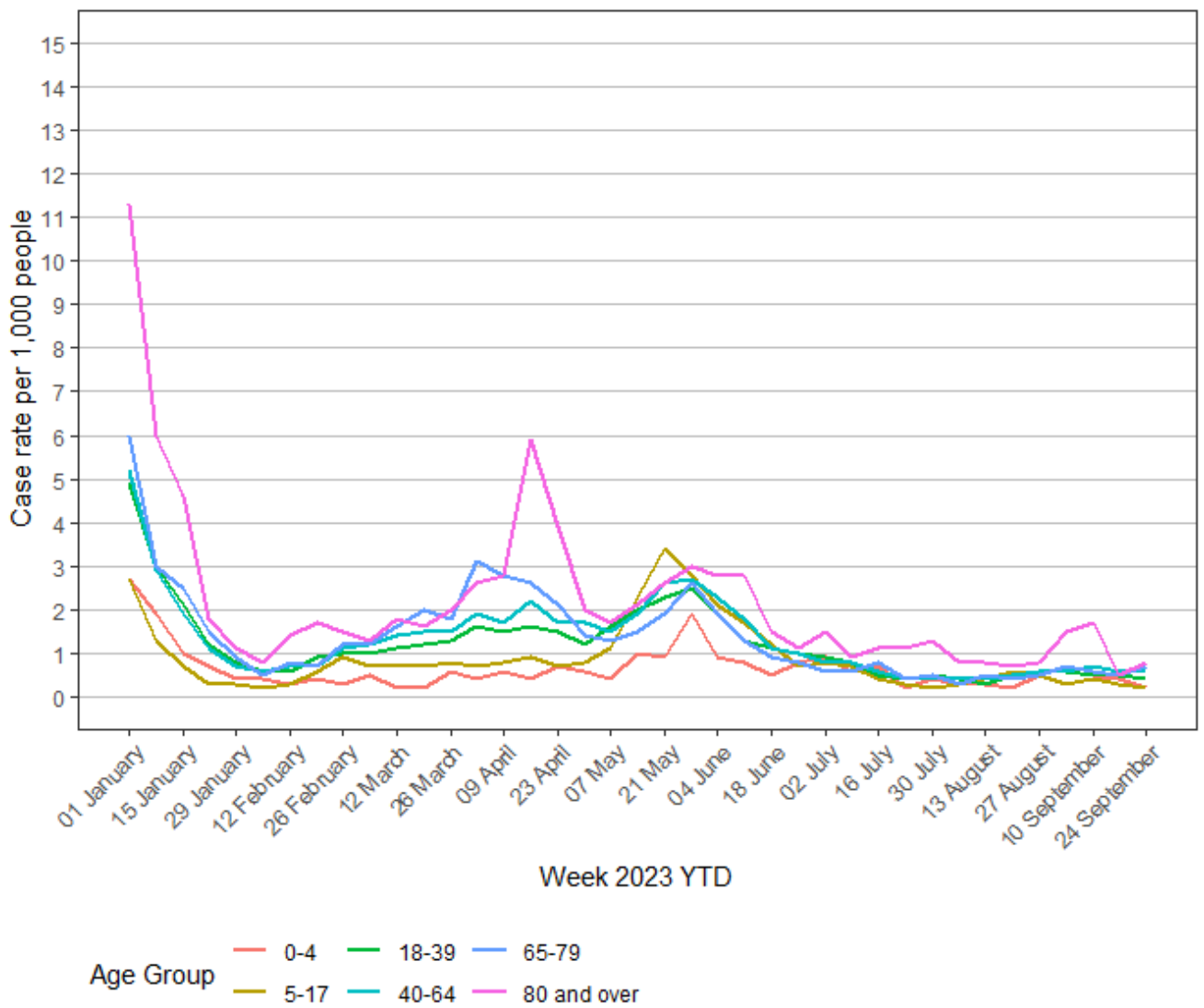


Figure 5. Weekly number of COVID-19 cases per 1,000 people (rate) notified in Tasmania from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by age group.

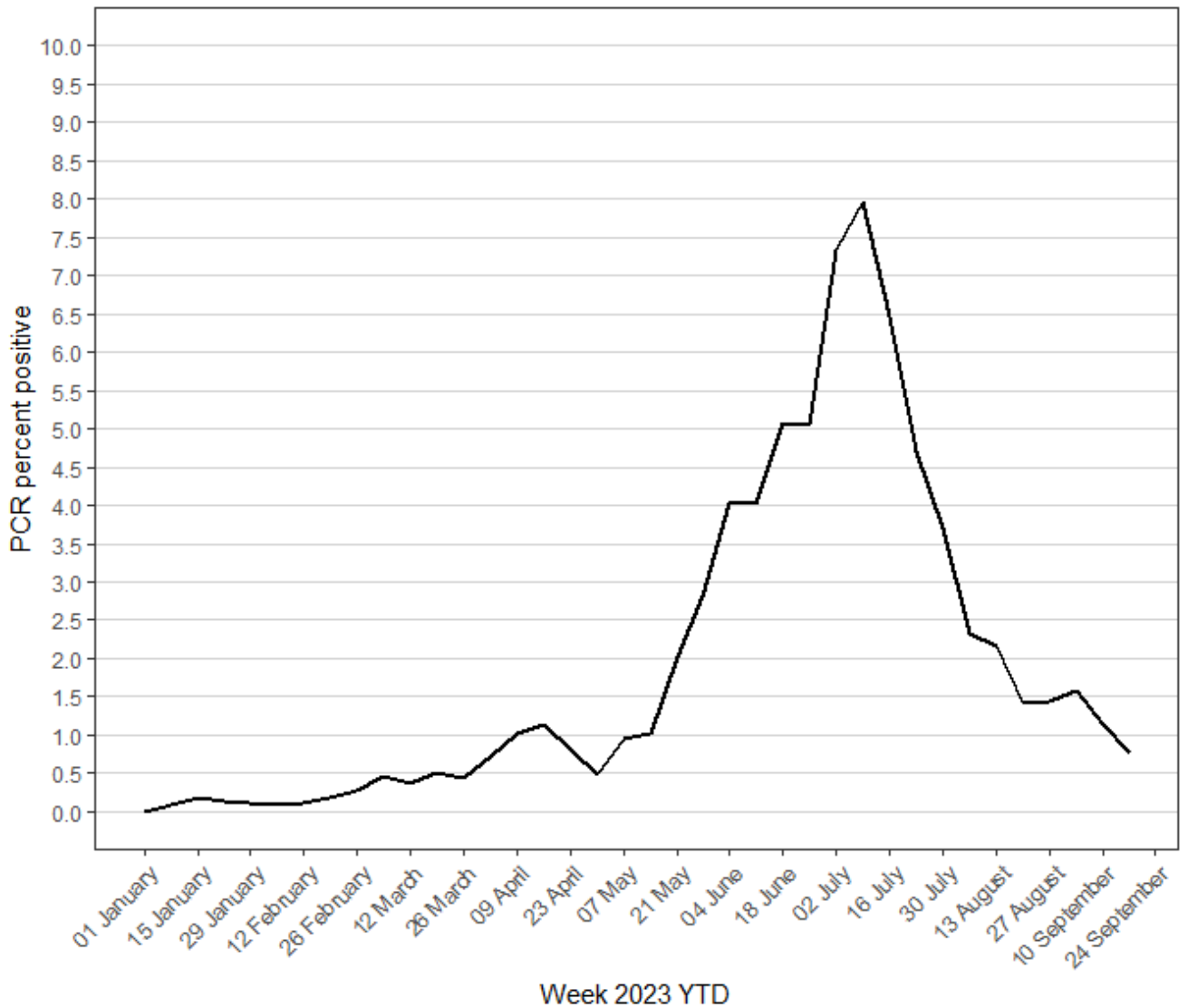
1.2.6 Weekly COVID-19 case numbers and number of cases per 1,000 people, by Local Government Area

Table 2. COVID-19 cases and number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) notified per week in Tasmania, for each of the last four weeks and total cases notified from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by Local Government Area (LGA).

	03Sep2023		10Sep2023		17Sep2023		24Sep2023		Total Since 1 January 2023	
	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Total Cases	Cumulative prevalence YTD
Break O'Day	1	0.1	0	-	1	0.1	1	0.1	216	31.1
Brighton	24	1.2	14	0.7	10	0.5	4	0.2	776	40.3
Burnie	5	0.2	2	0.1	6	0.3	2	0.1	807	39.5
Central Coast	9	0.4	4	0.2	8	0.3	9	0.4	840	36.1
Central Highlands	1	0.4	1	0.4	0	-	0	-	56	21.7
Circular Head	4	0.5	2	0.2	2	0.2	1	0.1	164	19.7
Clarence	26	0.4	24	0.4	44	0.7	47	0.8	2863	45.9
Derwent Valley	0	-	2	0.2	6	0.5	3	0.3	363	32.7
Devonport	10	0.4	8	0.3	9	0.3	11	0.4	1000	37.1
Dorset	1	0.1	0	-	2	0.3	2	0.3	221	31.6
Flinders	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	25	26.7
George Town	14	1.9	12	1.7	2	0.3	0	-	286	39.7
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	0	-	0	-	1	0.2	2	0.4	111	21.7
Glenorchy	60	1.2	70	1.4	25	0.5	15	0.3	2195	42.8
Hobart	42	0.7	50	0.9	42	0.7	37	0.7	2603	46.4
Huon Valley	22	1.2	27	1.4	17	0.9	16	0.9	753	40.0
Kentish	3	0.4	4	0.6	0	-	1	0.1	203	29.9
King Island	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	21	12.7
Kingborough	32	0.8	34	0.8	18	0.4	30	0.7	2042	50.0
Latrobe	3	0.2	7	0.6	7	0.6	4	0.3	578	45.5
Launceston	31	0.4	26	0.4	26	0.4	39	0.5	3326	46.3
Meander Valley	2	0.1	3	0.1	3	0.1	6	0.3	726	34.3
Northern Midlands	8	0.6	10	0.7	2	0.1	2	0.1	534	38.1
Sorell	10	0.6	8	0.5	9	0.5	13	0.8	656	38.6
Southern Midlands	1	0.1	2	0.3	2	0.3	4	0.6	198	29.0
Tasman	1	0.4	1	0.4	2	0.8	1	0.4	103	39.0
Waratah-Wynyard	1	0.1	2	0.1	3	0.2	1	0.1	520	35.5
West Coast	5	1.1	0	-	0	-	5	1.1	138	31.6
West Tamar	7	0.3	7	0.3	13	0.5	8	0.3	854	33.2

1.3 Influenza

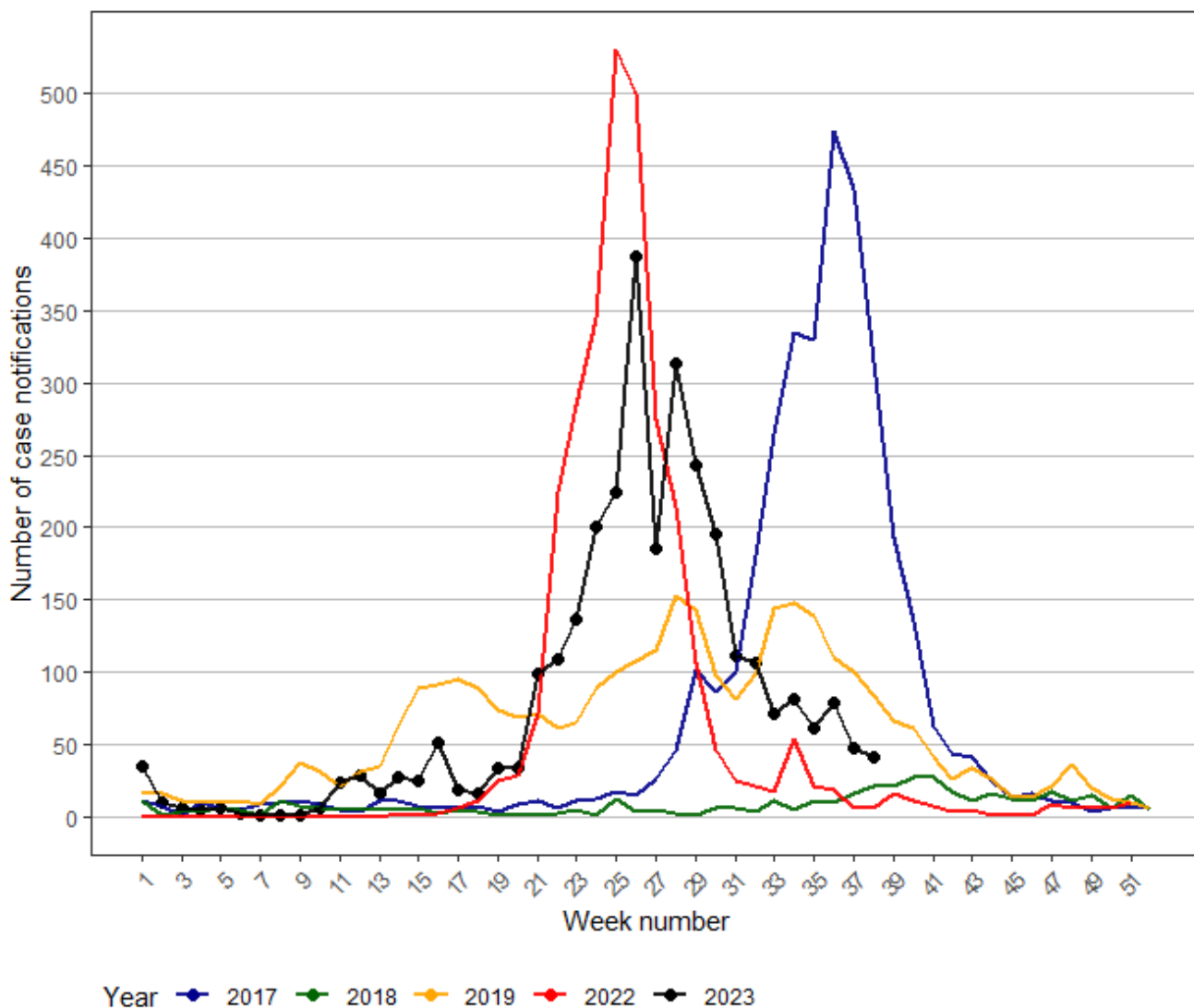
1.3.1 Weekly percentage of PCR tests positive for influenza



*Pathology data regarding the testing of influenza specimens is received a week following the data collection cut-off date hence the 7-day lag in reporting.

Figure 6: Weekly percentage of PCR tests positive for influenza in Tasmania from 1 January 2023 to 17 September 2023.

1.3.2 Number of influenza cases notified per week



*2020 and 2021 have been removed from this figure due to the very low number of influenza cases notified during these two years.

Figure 7: Number of influenza cases in Tasmania notified per week from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2019 and from 1 January 2022 to 24 September 2023.

1.3.3 Weekly influenza case numbers and the number of cases per 1,000 people, by region of residence and age group

Table 3: Influenza cases and number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) per week notified in Tasmania for each of the last four weeks, and total number and overall number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by region of residence and age group.

	03Sep2023		10Sep2023		17Sep2023		24Sep2023		Total Since 1 January 2023	
	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Total Cases	Cumulative prevalence YTD
Region of Residence										
North	29	0.2	41	0.3	29	0.2	19	0.1	1143	7.4
North-West	8	0.1	11	0.1	3	0.0	6	0.1	477	4.0
South	25	0.1	27	0.1	16	0.1	17	0.1	1431	4.9
Unknown Region	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	-
Age Group										
0-4	5	0.2	8	0.3	7	0.2	3	0.1	267	9.1
5-17	27	0.3	20	0.2	12	0.1	12	0.1	1002	12.0
18-39	12	0.1	20	0.1	8	0.1	8	0.1	806	5.7
40-64	12	0.1	21	0.1	14	0.1	10	0.1	673	3.9
65-79	5	0.1	8	0.1	6	0.1	5	0.1	223	2.7
80 and over	1	0.0	2	0.1	1	0.0	4	0.2	81	3.2
Unknown Age	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total	62	0.1	79	0.1	48	0.1	42	0.1	3052	5.4

1.3.4 Weekly number of influenza cases per 1,000 people, by region of residence

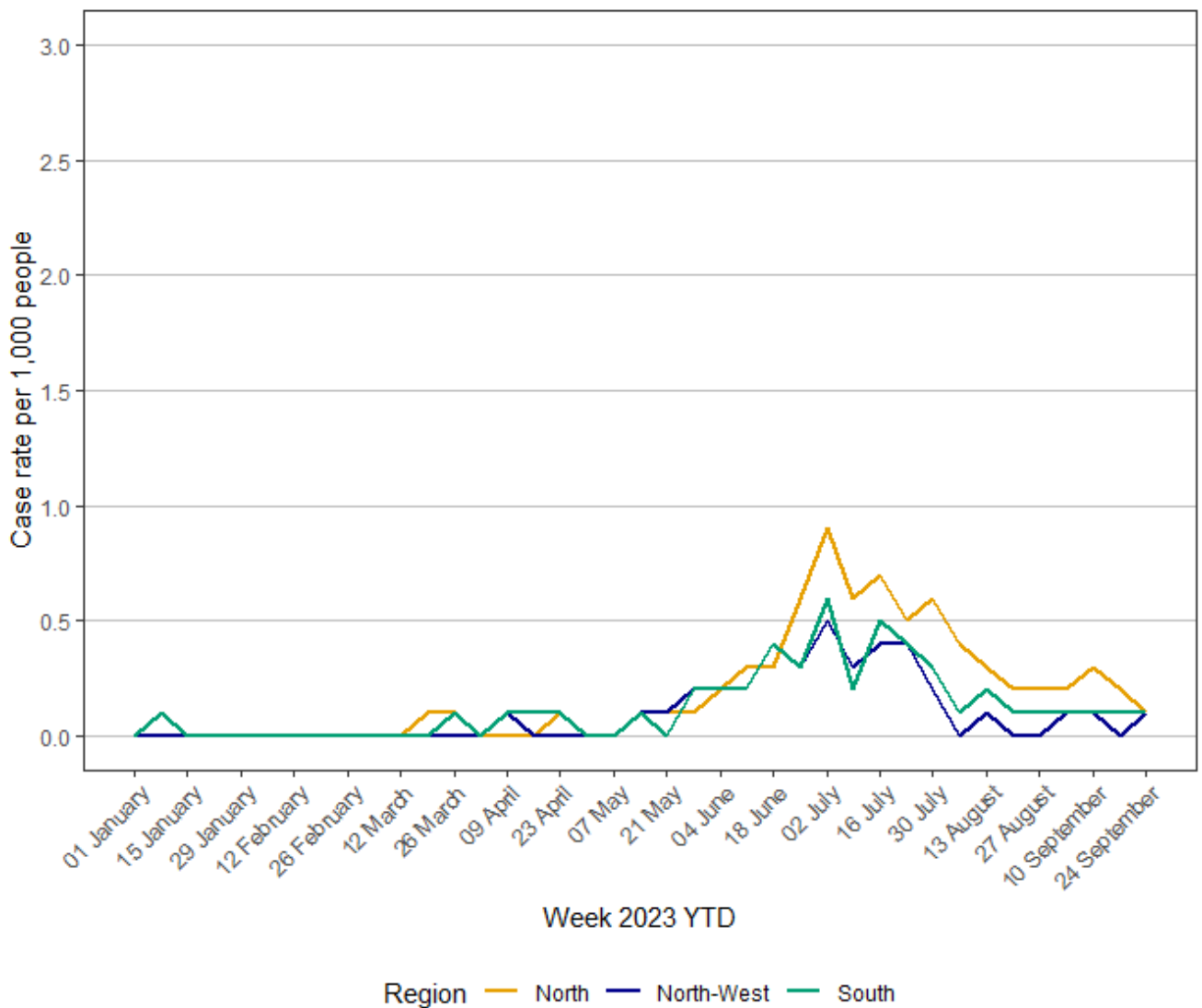


Figure 8: Weekly number of influenza cases per 1,000 people (rate) from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by region of residence

1.3.5 Weekly number of influenza cases per 1,000 people, by age group

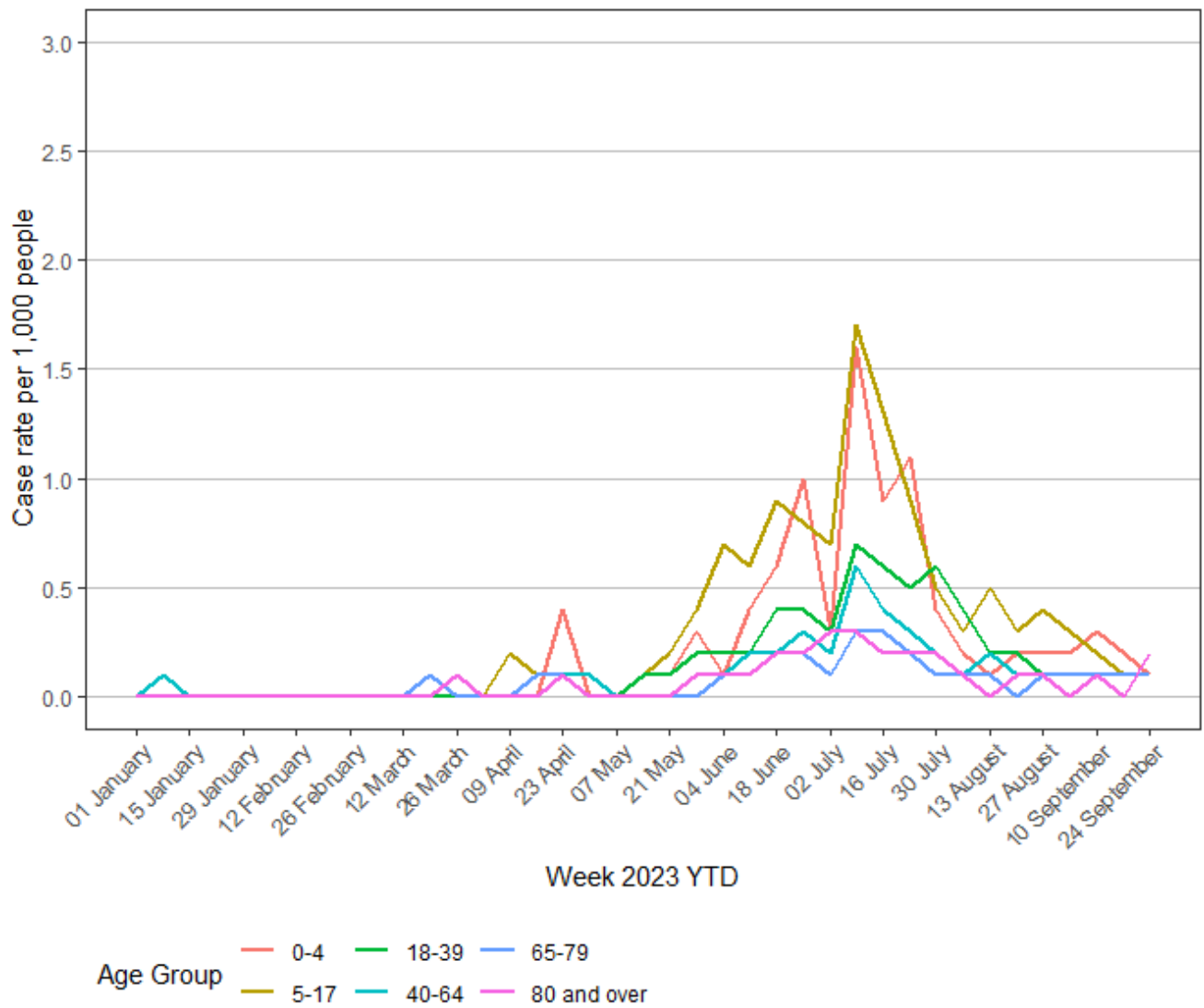


Figure 9: Weekly number of influenza cases per 1000 people (rate) from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by age group.

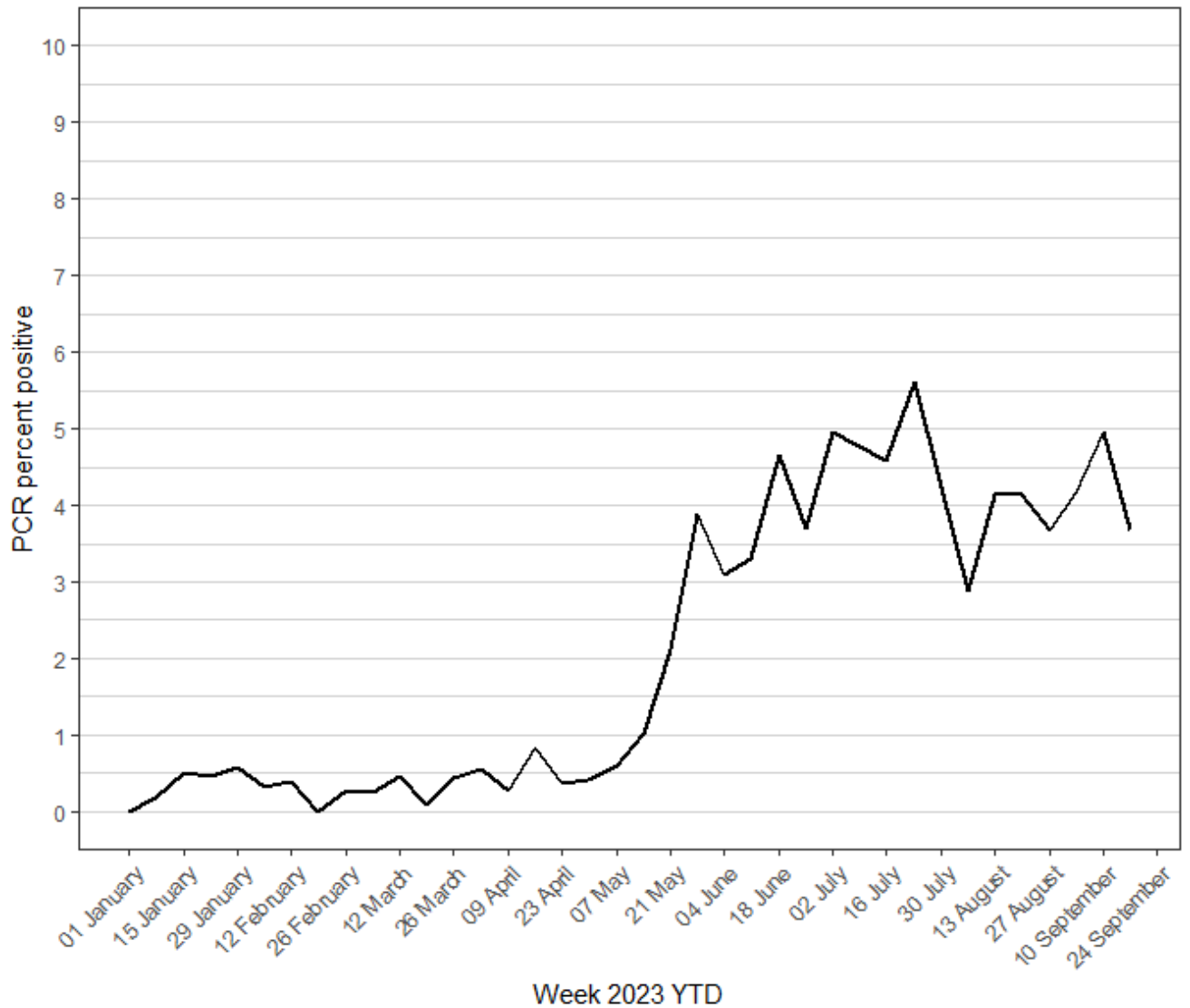
1.3.6 Weekly influenza case numbers and number of cases per 1,000 people, by Local Government Area

Table 4. Influenza cases and number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) notified per week in Tasmania, for each of the last four weeks and total cases notified from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by Local Government Area (LGA).

	03Sep2023		10Sep2023		17Sep2023		24Sep2023		Total Since 1 January 2023	
	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Total Cases	Cumulative prevalence YTD
Break O'Day	2	0.3	1	0.1	2	0.3	2	0.3	20	2.9
Brighton	7	0.4	4	0.2	1	0.1	0	-	127	6.6
Burnie	1	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0	1	0.0	82	4.0
Central Coast	4	0.2	2	0.1	1	0.0	2	0.1	86	3.7
Central Highlands	0	-	0	-	1	0.4	0	-	5	1.9
Circular Head	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	18	2.2
Clarence	4	0.1	5	0.1	3	0.0	1	0.0	294	4.7
Derwent Valley	1	0.1	2	0.2	2	0.2	0	-	42	3.8
Devonport	0	-	1	0.0	0	-	0	-	141	5.2
Dorset	0	-	1	0.1	0	-	0	-	24	3.4
Flinders	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	1.1
George Town	0	-	3	0.4	0	-	0	-	123	17.1
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	0	-	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	-	26	5.1
Glenorchy	9	0.2	5	0.1	2	0.0	3	0.1	252	4.9
Hobart	1	0.0	4	0.1	1	0.0	2	0.0	235	4.2
Huon Valley	0	-	4	0.2	2	0.1	6	0.3	88	4.7
Kentish	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	-	0	-	36	5.3
King Island	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	7	4.2
Kingborough	2	0.0	1	0.0	2	0.0	1	0.0	170	4.2
Latrobe	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	50	3.9
Launceston	13	0.2	25	0.3	12	0.2	12	0.2	603	8.4
Meander Valley	3	0.1	6	0.3	6	0.3	0	-	114	5.4
Northern Midlands	4	0.3	3	0.2	6	0.4	3	0.2	118	8.4
Sorell	1	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.1	3	0.2	147	8.7
Southern Midlands	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	0.1	30	4.4
Tasman	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	15	5.7
Waratah-Wynyard	0	-	0	-	0	-	3	0.2	39	2.7
West Coast	2	0.5	6	1.4	1	0.2	0	-	18	4.1
West Tamar	7	0.3	2	0.1	3	0.1	2	0.1	140	5.4

1.4 Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

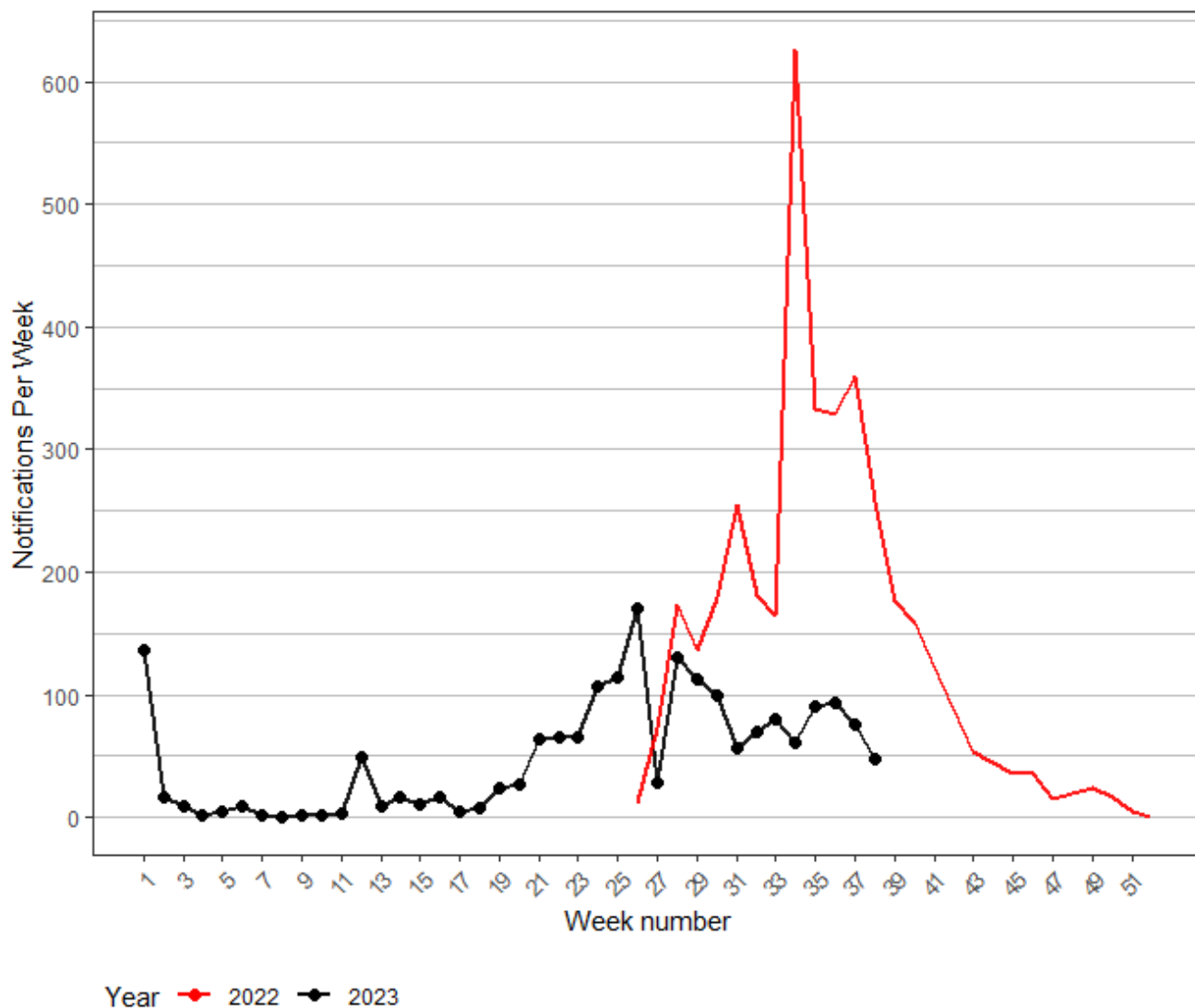
1.4.1 Weekly percentage of PCR tests positive for RSV



*Pathology data regarding the testing of RSV specimens is received a week following the data collection cut-off date hence the 7-day lag in reporting.

Figure 10: Weekly percentage of PCR tests positive for RSV in Tasmania from 1 January 2023 to 03 Sep 2023.

1.4.2 Number of RSV cases notified per week



*RSV infection became a notifiable disease in Tasmania from 1 July 2022.

Figure 11: Number of RSV cases notified per week in Tasmania from 1 July 2022 to 24 September 2023.

1.4.3 Weekly RSV case numbers and the number of cases per 1,000 people, by region of residence and age group

Table 5: RSV cases and number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) per week notified in Tasmania for each of the last four weeks, and total number and overall number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by age group and region of residence.

Region of Residence	03Sep2023		10Sep2023		17Sep2023		24Sep2023		Total Since 1 January 2023	
	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Total Cases	Cumulative prevalence YTD
North	22	0.1	51	0.3	26	0.2	15	0.1	777	5.0
North-West	21	0.2	14	0.1	21	0.2	11	0.1	250	2.1
South	47	0.2	28	0.1	29	0.1	21	0.1	854	2.9
Unknown Region	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	-
Age Group										
0-4	28	1.0	44	1.5	33	1.1	17	0.6	756	25.8
5-17	13	0.2	6	0.1	6	0.1	2	0.0	139	1.7
18-39	12	0.1	12	0.1	5	0.0	7	0.0	262	1.9
40-64	13	0.1	8	0.0	7	0.0	8	0.0	258	1.5
65-79	11	0.1	8	0.1	14	0.2	8	0.1	274	3.3
80 and over	13	0.5	15	0.6	11	0.4	5	0.2	193	7.6
Unknown Age	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Total	90	0.2	93	0.2	76	0.1	47	0.1	1882	3.3

1.4.4 Weekly number of RSV cases per 1,000 people, by region of residence

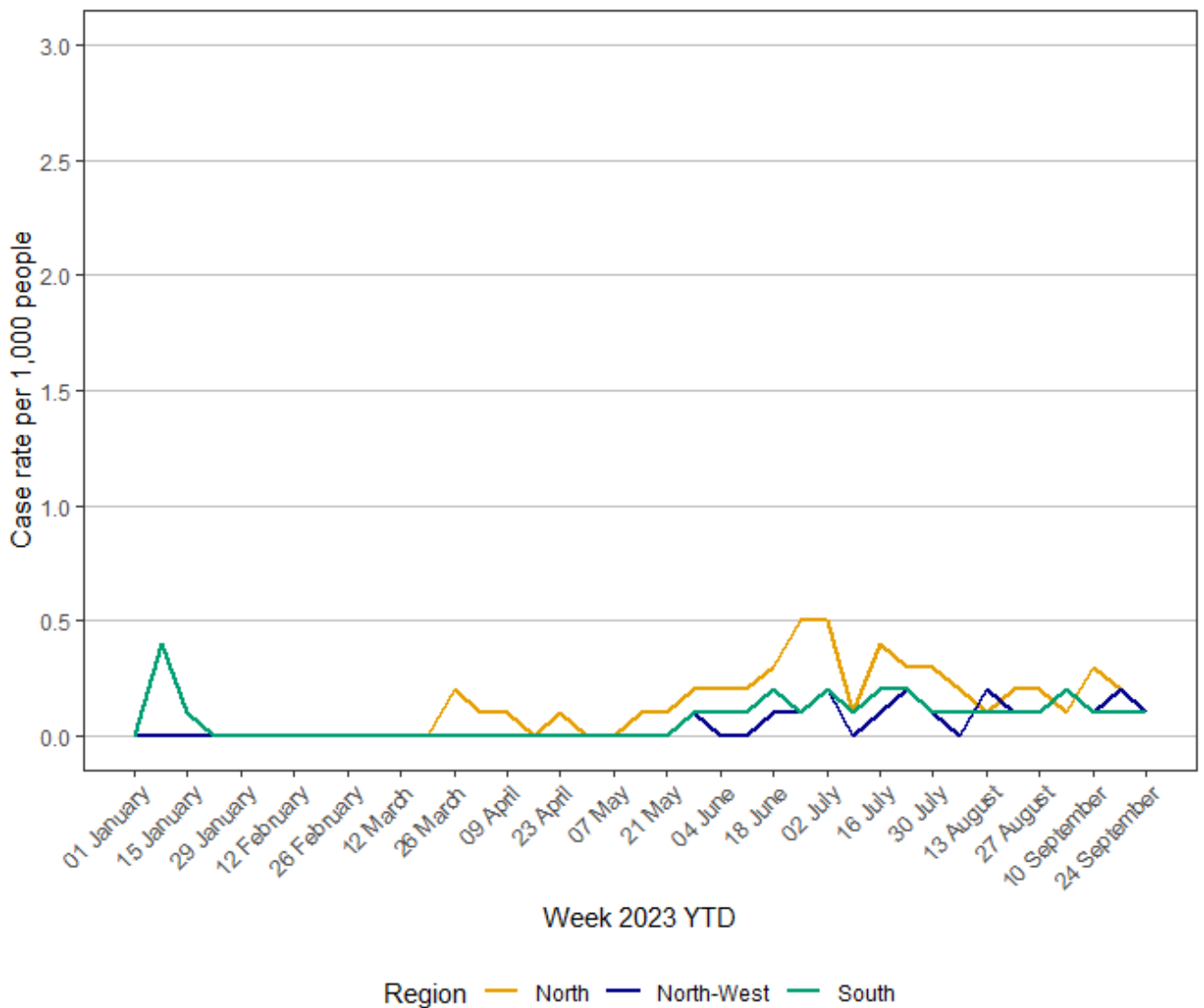


Figure 12: Weekly number of RSV cases per 1000 people (rate) from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by region of residence.

1.4.5 Weekly number of RSV cases per 1,000 people, by age group

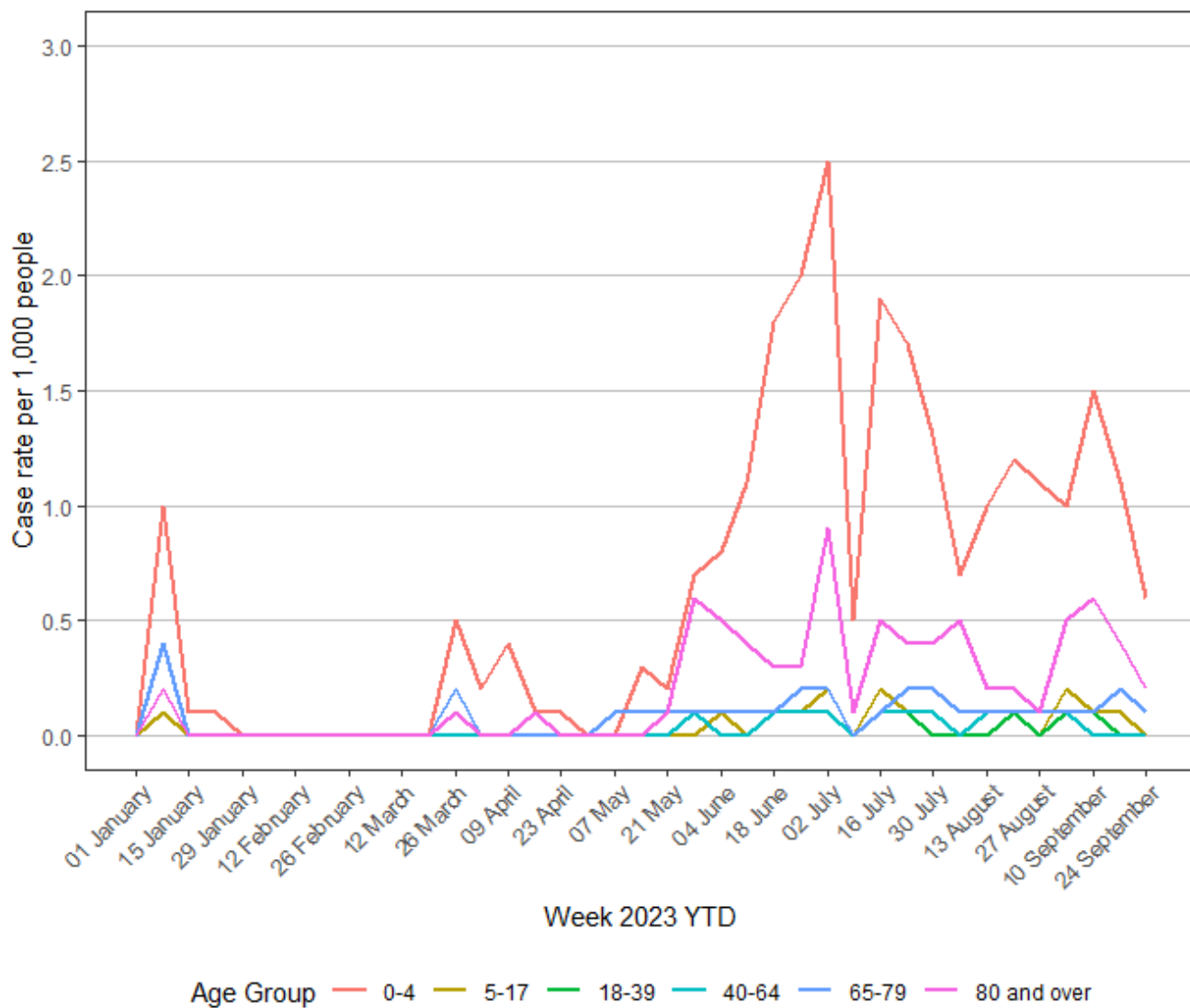


Figure 13: Weekly number of RSV cases per 1,000 people (rate) from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by age group.

1.4.6 Weekly RSV case numbers and number of cases per 1,000 people, by Local Government Area

Table 6. RSV cases and number of cases per 1,000 people (rate) notified per week in Tasmania, for each of the last four weeks and total cases notified from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by Local Government Area (LGA).

	03Sep2023		10Sep2023		17Sep2023		24Sep2023		Total Since 1 January 2023	
	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Cases	Rate	Total Cases	Cumulative prevalence YTD
Break O'Day	0	-	1	0.1	0	-	0	-	20	2.9
Brighton	5	0.3	0	-	1	0.1	2	0.1	45	2.3
Burnie	5	0.2	3	0.1	2	0.1	2	0.1	66	3.2
Central Coast	6	0.3	6	0.3	2	0.1	2	0.1	43	1.8
Central Highlands	1	0.4	0	-	0	-	0	-	3	1.2
Circular Head	0	-	1	0.1	2	0.2	1	0.1	7	0.8
Clarence	9	0.1	3	0.0	7	0.1	3	0.0	189	3.0
Derwent Valley	0	-	2	0.2	2	0.2	1	0.1	24	2.2
Devonport	6	0.2	3	0.1	10	0.4	3	0.1	65	2.4
Dorset	0	-	3	0.4	0	-	0	-	20	2.9
Flinders	1	1.1	1	1.1	0	-	0	-	2	2.1
George Town	1	0.1	3	0.4	3	0.4	0	-	53	7.3
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	1	0.2	0	-	0	-	0	-	6	1.2
Glenorchy	11	0.2	4	0.1	6	0.1	1	0.0	154	3.0
Hobart	9	0.2	8	0.1	4	0.1	5	0.1	205	3.7
Huon Valley	0	-	1	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.1	33	1.8
Kentish	1	0.1	1	0.1	0	-	0	-	7	1.0
King Island	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Kingborough	4	0.1	3	0.1	6	0.1	4	0.1	100	2.5
Latrobe	2	0.2	0	-	1	0.1	1	0.1	22	1.7
Launceston	10	0.1	29	0.4	18	0.3	12	0.2	458	6.4
Meander Valley	2	0.1	4	0.2	3	0.1	0	-	72	3.4
Northern Midlands	2	0.1	6	0.4	1	0.1	1	0.1	69	4.9
Sorell	4	0.2	6	0.4	2	0.1	3	0.2	81	4.8
Southern Midlands	3	0.4	1	0.1	0	-	1	0.1	11	1.6
Tasman	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	3	1.1
Waratah-Wynyard	1	0.1	0	-	4	0.3	2	0.1	28	1.9
West Coast	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	12	2.7
West Tamar	6	0.2	4	0.2	1	0.0	2	0.1	83	3.2

1.5 Other respiratory pathogens

1.5.1 Weekly number of tests, percentage of PCR tests positive and weekly case numbers for other respiratory pathogens

Two pathology providers in Tasmania provide respiratory pathogen PCR testing data to Public Health Services for routine surveillance: Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) Pathology and Diagnostic Services Pty Ltd (DSPL) (Hobart Pathology, Launceston Pathology, North-West Pathology). Depending on the test conducted, multiplex testing may cover adenovirus, Bordetella pertussis, influenza A, influenza B, metapneumovirus, Mycoplasma pneumoniae, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), rhinovirus and SARS-CoV-2 infections. Data in this table provides an indication of circulating respiratory pathogens other than influenza, RSV and SARS-CoV-2.

Table 7: Number of PCR tests (both positive and negative), percentage of tests positive and weekly case numbers for other respiratory pathogens in Tasmania, for the last four weeks to 17 September 2023 and since 1 January 2023.

	27Aug2023		03Sep2023		10Sep2023		17Sep2023		Total Since 1 January 2023	
	Tests	Percent positive	Tests	Percent positive	Tests	Percent positive	Tests	Percent positive	Total Tests	Cumulative prevalence YTD
Adenovirus	470	3.0	535	2.2	491	4.3	414	3.1	12483	3.3
Bordetella pertussis	92	0.0	114	0.0	129	0.0	102	0.0	2231	0.1
Metapneumovirus	470	2.6	535	2.2	491	4.1	414	1.9	12483	3.1
Mycoplasma pneumoniae	92	0.0	114	0.0	129	0.0	102	0.0	2230	0.1
Parainfluenza	470	4.0	535	4.5	491	5.5	414	6.0	12483	2.8
Rhinovirus	470	18.1	535	21.7	491	20.8	414	21.0	12484	18.6
	Cases		Cases		Cases		Cases		Cases	
Adenovirus	14		12		21		13		60	
Bordetella pertussis	0		0		0		0		0	
Metapneumovirus	12		12		20		8		52	
Mycoplasma pneumoniae	0		0		0		0		0	
Parainfluenza	19		24		27		25		95	
Rhinovirus	85		116		102		87		390	

Section 2: Severity

2.1 COVID-19

2.1.1 Clinical severity and deaths in reported COVID-19 cases by reporting week

Table 8: Hospital admissions with or due to COVID-19, number of ICU admissions (for any reason), and deaths for which COVID-19 was a cause or contributing factor, in Tasmania for each of the last four weeks and from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023.

Reporting Week	03Sep2023	10Sep2023	17Sep2023	24Sep2023	Total Since 1 January 2023
All Hospital Admissions with COVID-19	14	18	11	12	1245
Intensive Care Admissions	0	0	1	0	39
Deaths	0	0	0	0	79

2.1.2 Hospital admissions in reported COVID-19 cases by age group

Table 9: Hospital admissions with or due to COVID-19 in Tasmania for each of the last four weeks and from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by age group.

Age Group	03Sep2023	10Sep2023	17Sep2023	24Sep2023	Total Since 1 January 2023
0-4	0	1	1	1	48
5-17	0	1	0	0	24
18-39	4	0	0	2	102
40-64	3	6	4	1	231
65-79	2	3	2	2	387
80 and over	5	7	4	6	453
Total	14	18	11	12	1245

2.1.3 Deaths in reported COVID-19 cases by age group

Table 10: Deaths for which COVID-19 was a cause or contributing factor, in Tasmania for each of the last four weeks and from 1 January 2023 to 24 September 2023, by age group.

Age Group	03Sep2023	10Sep2023	17Sep2023	24Sep2023	Total Since 1 January 2023
0-4	0	0	0	0	0
5-17	0	0	0	0	0
18-39	0	0	0	0	0
40-64	0	0	0	0	6
65-79	0	0	0	0	24
80 and over	0	0	0	0	49
Total	0	0	0	0	79

Section 3: Genomics/Virology

3.1 COVID-19

3.1.1 COVID-19 variants identified by whole genome sequencing.

Like all viruses, SARS-CoV-2 changes over time. The World Health Organization monitors these changes and classifies lineages according to the risk that they pose to global public health. In Australia, The Communicable Diseases Genomic Network (CDGN) Variants of Concern (VOC) Working Group is closely monitoring SARS-CoV-2 changes to gain a better understanding of the impact of mutations (<https://www.cdgn.org.au/variants-of-concern>). Those that they identify as having changes that increase transmissibility, increase virulence, or decrease the effectiveness of vaccines or treatments are designated as variants of concern.

Whole genome sequencing is used in Tasmania to monitor for new SARS-CoV-2 variants circulating in the community, in particular variants of concern. Whole genome sequencing is a laboratory procedure that identifies the genetic profile of an organism. Whole genome sequencing can help understand how a virus transmits, responds to vaccination and the severity of disease it may cause. It can also help to monitor the spread of the virus by identifying specimens that are genomically similar. In Tasmania, whole genome sequencing for SARS-CoV-2 is conducted at the Royal Hobart Hospital Pathology Laboratory.

Not all case specimens are sequenced. Specimens from people with COVID-19 who are admitted to hospital, or ICU are prioritised, to identify and understand lineages with increased disease severity. Specimens from overseas arrivals are also prioritised to monitor for the introduction of new variants into the community. As this is not a random sample, the proportion of sequences identified does not necessarily reflect their distribution in the community.

There is a time lag between the date a PCR test is taken and the date that the results of whole genome sequencing are reported to Public Health Services. The count of specimens which have been sequenced for recent weeks will therefore increase over time.

COVID-19 variants identified by whole genome sequencing in Tasmania to 24 September 2023:

- During the last four weeks (from 28 August to 24 September 2023), a total of 65 samples were sequenced.
- Recombinant GL.1 was the most common variant detected through whole genome sequencing in this period (18 out of 65), followed by EG.5.1.1 (8 out of 65) and XBB.1.16.6 (7 out of 65). Other variants detected include XBC1.3, XBC1.6 and DV.7.1
- XBB.1.5 was previously common in Tasmania but has not been identified among sequenced samples since 7 August 2023.

3.2 Influenza

3.2.1 Influenza by virological type and subtype/lineage

Table 11: Notifications of influenza by virological type and subtype/lineage in the four weeks to 24 September 2023 and total since 1 January 2023, Tasmania

Influenza Type	4 - weeks to 24 September 2023		Total since 1 January 2023	
	Notifications	Percentage	Notifications	Percentage
Influenza A	118	51.1	1918	62.8
Influenza B	113	48.9	1134	37.2
Total	231	100.0	3052	100.0

Table 12: Notifications of influenza by subtype/lineage in the four weeks to 24 September 2023 and total since 1 January 2023, Tasmania

Influenza Subtype/lineage		4 - weeks to 24 September 2023		Total since 1 January 2023	
		Notifications	Percentage	Notifications	Percentage
Influenza A	A (H1N1)	0	0.0	145	96.7
	A (H3N2)	0	0.0	5	3.3
	Not Sub-Typed	118	NA	1768	NA
Influenza B	B Victoria	0	0.0	54	100.0
	B Other	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Not Sub-Typed	113	NA	1080	NA
Total		231		3052	



Department of **Health**
GPO Box 125
Hobart TAS 7001

1300 135 513

www.health.tas.gov.au