This document provides supplemental data for the paper:

Spennemann, Dirk H.R. (subm.). Suicides of Punjabi hawkers in nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia. *Indian J Psychiatry* 2019;XX:XX-XX.

The data presented here are derived from a suite of sources. In the first instance, these were the birth, death and marriage records of the various colonies (compiled until 1900 in Spennemann, subm.-a), as well as the databases of the inquest deposition files of the Victorian and NSW Coroner’s Offices (NSW Attorney General and Justice, 1821-1937; Public Records Office Victoria, 1853–1939). These data were augmented by searches of Trove, the online digital archive of historic Australian newspapers hosted by the National Library of Australia (2017). The digitised newspapers were systematically searched for the period 1880 to 1950. The searches used the keyword combination ‘year’ + ‘suicide’ + ‘Hindoo,’ whereby ‘Hindoo’ was the generic nineteenth century appellation for Punjabi (as it was occasionally already spelled ‘Hindu’ which this was also searched). In addition, name-based searches were run, using the search logic ‘year’ + ‘suicide’ + ‘name,’ whereby the family names Bux, Box, Buksh, Deen, Khan, Dean, Gill, Singh, as well as the given names Adbdool, Abdul, Ali, Mahomet, Mohamed, and Mohammed were checked. The methodological limitations of this approach, primarily due to newspaper print quality, is discussed elsewhere (Spennemann, subm.-a). In total 25 suicides (and 8 suicide attempts could be identified.

It is highly likely that suicide attempts are underreported. While all actual drownings resulted in coronial inquests (for ex. see data in Spennemann, subm.-a), attempts at suicide by drowning are only reported when the individual involved acted in a suspicious manner to attract attention or declared that he wished to end his life. If attempts using any of the other methods of suicide were unsuccessful, and the individual, once saved, did not persist, then these attempts would in all likelihood go undetected, but certainly go unreported. In addition, some suicides may have been successful without being recognised as such at the time. These numbers are likely to be small, however, and most probably limited to occasions of drowning.

The specific ethnicity and cultural affiliation of a hawker or labourer is usually not spelled out in any of the sources. Even the death certificates are often ambiguous. The most commonly used term, ‘Hindoo,’ is generic and certainly refers to the Hindu and Sikh, but also includes those Punjabi of Muslim faith, and probably also some of the Afghan hawkers. On occasion, the ethnicities are utterly and egregiously commingled, in particular in newspaper items. Depending on the editor, all persons of darker skin tones were collectively either ‘Hindoo’ or, occasionally, ‘Syrian’ (e.g., Anonymous, 1918), even though in most cases their names were obviously Punjabi, Afghan and Lebanese (Syrian).

A particularly egregious case is that of ‘Charley Alexander’ (aka ‘Charley Alexandra,’ ‘Charley Anderson’), who on 8 December 1893 stole a carving knife from a grocers and ran into the middle of the street in Fitzroy (Melbourne, Vic), where he called out “some exclamations in his native tongue” and then stabbed himself several times in the abdomen, followed by two cuts across his throat, one of which almost severed his head (Anonymous, 1893b). Causes of the suicide were not known, but “subject poverty and wretchedness” was assumed (Anonymous, 1893c), as he reputedly had been homeless for several months, relying on St Vincent de Paul shelter for accommodation and his diet consisted primarily of bananas donated to him by fruit merchants (Anonymous, 1893b). The public identification proved to be mistaken when the real Charley Alexandra presented himself to the police to prove he was alive and well (Anonymous, 1893a) At the inquest it was revealed that the ‘Hindoo’ was in fact Missim Mattatia, a Greek from Corfu (Anonymous, 1893d).

To cater for the fact that some Punjabi may have been commingled under the label ‘Syrian’, a systematic search was run to that effect. On occasion Punjabi are even addressed as ‘Asiatics,’ thus further commingling them with the Chinese. Therefore,
unless family names are given in the sources that unequivocally identify the individual as Punjabi, any other attribution as ‘Hindoo’ needs to be verified. In all cases all reports of the event were examined, even of only one or two were cited here. Those addressed as Hindu, but identified as Lebanese, were excluded.

![Figure 1: Frequency of suicides and suicide attempts in five-year cohorts](image)

| Name                  | Date of suicide | Place                    | Age | Method           | ICD-10 | Cause (if known)                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----|------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| Mahomet Ali           | 1888, May 13    | Townsiba, Qld            | 18  | strychnine poisoning | X68    |
| Pine Barrum           | 1889, Nov 5     | Melbourne, Vic           | 45  | hanging          | X70    |
| Mis Khan              | 1889, Dec 31    | Anna Creek, SA           | 25  | shot himself     | X73    |
| Ali Azedelle          | 1894, Oct 11    | Redfern, NSW             | 47  | shot himself     | X72    | domestic trouble (?)               |
| Masivi Singh          | 1896, Oct 24    | Adelaide SA              | 27  | hanging          | X70    | charged with attempted murder      |
| Gooram Dabee Singh    | 1897, Nov 2     | Stradbroke Is, Qld       | 46  | cut own throat   | X78    |
| Nabi Bukhsh           | 1898, Jun 9     | Bathurst, NSW            | 50  | arsenic poisoning | X68    |
| Khaim Singh           | 1898, Jul 14    | Moorooptna, Vic          | 46  | drowning         | X71    | ‘temporarily insane’               |
| name not known        | 1900, Mar 1     | at sea off WA            | ca 60| drowning        | X71    |
| Abdul Khadhair        | 1902, Mar 4     | Yarra, Vic               | 28  | hanging          | X70    |
| Goodya Singh          | 1902, Oct 11    | Temora, NSW              | 38  | starvation       | X84    |
| Hakim Singh           | 1903, May 21?   | Swan Hill, Vic           | 35  | strychnine poisoning | X68    | financial losses                  |
| Sundah Singh          | 1904, July 3    | Paralana Run, SA         | 50  | shot himself     | X73    |
| Prem Singh            | 1905, Nov 4     | Yarram, Vic              | 40  | drowned          | X71    | loss of possessions?              |
| Jimmy                 | 1906, Apr 20    | Breadalbane, NSW         |     | immolation       | X76    |
| Chanda Singh          | 1907, Mar 31    | Temora, NSW              | 50  | drowning         | X70    | depression                        |
| Cher Singh            | 1910, May 9     | Tallangatta, Vic         | 65  | drowning         | X71    |
| Solomon Khan          | 1911, Oct 4     | Rosebery, NSW            | 45  | strychnine poisoning | X68    | debt and gambling losses          |
| Kishin Singh          | 1911, Oct 19?   | Merino, Vic              | 46  | drowning         | X71    |
| Lalla Ghie            | 1916, Jun 28    | Four Mile, Qld           | 40  | cut own throat   | X78    |
| Soondah Singh         | 1920, Mar 17?   | Sunbury, Vic             | 60  | shot himself     | X73    |
| Sunner Singh          | 1926, Sep 15    | Tin tenbar, NSW          | 50  | hanging          | X70    |
| Lal Singh             | 1929, Jan 25    | Moulamein, NSW           | 68  | drowning while intoxicated | X71    |
| Nathoo Khan           | 1930, Dec 23    | Bathurst, NSW            | 57  | strangulation    | X70    | charged with attempted murder     |
| Patarp Singh          | 1951, Sep 29    | Henty, NSW               | 83  | cut own throat   | X78    | depression                        |

**Table 2: Recorded suicide attempts of Punjabi hawkers 1851-1951**

| Name                  | Date of attempt | Place                    | Age | Method           | ICD-10 | Reason for suicide                  |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----|------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| Jury                  | 1889, Oct 12    | Surry Hills, NSW         | 28  | cut own throat   | X78    | wanted leave for India, but was owed money |
| Fatta Chand           | 1891, April     | Melbourne, Vic           |     | starvation       | X84    | condemned for murder               |
| unknown               | 1897, Jun 1     | Benalla, Vic             |     | drowning         | X71    | unknown                            |
| Cara Singh            | 1899, Apr 12    | Lismore, NSW             |     | drowning         | X71    | depression                        |
| Khishan Singh         | 1899, Dec 1     | Casterton, Vic           |     | drowning         | X71    | indictment for larceny             |
| “Frederick Dickson”   | 1903, Dec 30    | South Brisbane, Qld      |     | drowning         | X71    | harassment                        |
| Johalla Singh         | 1904, Mar 11    | Warrackanabeal, Vic      |     | drowning         | X71    | unknown                           |
| Ellam Deen            | 1907, Aug 1     | Port Melbourne, Vic      |     | drowning         | X71    | not stated                        |
| Hardit Singh          | 1924, Apr 13    | Stawell, Vic             | 57  | slashed wrists, cut own throat | X78    | unknown                           |
Table 3: Recorded suicides and suicide attempts attributed to persons who were misidentified as Punjabi in the press

| Name                  | Date       | Place            | Age | Method           | ICD-10 | Cause if known                          | Ethnicity     |
|-----------------------|------------|------------------|-----|------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------|---------------|
| Suicide               |            |                  |     |                  |        |                                         |               |
| Charles Bastine       | 1921, Jul 7| Deep Creek, NSW  | ca 50| shot himself     | X73    |                                         | Lebanese      |
| Maurice Roblin        | 1924, Sep 18| Bondi, NSW      |     | shot himself     | X72    | committed for attempted murder          | Lebanese      |
| Suicide attempt       |            |                  |     |                  |        |                                         |               |
| George Kanane         | 1889, Nov 1| Maryborough, Vic|     | stabbed in abdomen| X78    | encountered during theft                | Lebanese*     |
| Charles Alexander     | 1893, Dec 8| Melbourne, Vic   |     | stabbed in abdomen| X78    | “subject poverty and wretchedness”      | Greek         |
| Charles Lewis         | 1898, Jul 18| Sydney, NSW      | 28  | cut own throat    | X78    | (while drunk)                           | Lebanese      |
| George Ishmail        | 1923, Oct 31| Brisbane, Qld    |     | strychnine       | X68    |                                         | Lebanese      |

*Labelled ‘Manila hawker’ (Anonymous, 1889a)

The total numbers are too small to make meaningful comparisons on a state-by-state basis [Table 4].

Table 4: Total number of suicides and suicide attempts in five-year cohorts by colony/state

| Year | New South Wales | Queensland | South Australia | Victoria | Western Australia | Total | New South Wales | Queensland | Victoria | Total |
|------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|-------|-----------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| 1890 | 1               | 1          | 1               | 1         | 3                 | 1     | 1               | 1          | 1         | 2     |
| 1895 | 1               | 1          | 1               | 1         | 3                 | 3     | 0               |            |           |       |
| 1900 | 2               | 2          | 2               | 1         | 5                 | 5     | 1               | 1          | 1         | 2     |
| 1905 | 2               | 1          | 2               | 3         | 3                 | 5     | 1               | 2          | 3         |       |
| 1910 | 1               | 1          | 1               | 2         | 3                 | 3     | 0               |            |           |       |
| 1915 | 1               | 1          | 2               | 2         | 3                 | 3     | 0               |            |           |       |
| 1920 | 1               | 1          | 1               | 1         | 1                 | 1     | 0               |            |           |       |
| 1925 | 1               | 1          | 1               | 1         | 1                 | 1     | 0               |            |           |       |
| 1930 | 2               | 2          | 2               | 2         | 3                 | 2     | 0               |            |           |       |
| 1950 | 1               | 1          | 1               | 1         | 1                 | 1     | 0               |            |           |       |
| Total| 10              | 3          | 3               | 8         | 1                 | 25    | 2               | 1          | 5         | 8     |

Figure 1: Frequency of suicides and attempts compared to overall deaths by religious affiliation

Figure 2: Frequency of suicides and suicide attempts by religious affiliation

THE CASES IN DETAIL

This section sets out (in alphabetical order) the details of the individual cases of suicides and suicide attempts.
Name Unknown (1 June 1897 near Benalla). Suspected suicide of a hawker at King Parrot Creek near Benalla. The belongings of a hawker were found near the creek bank but no body was found (Anonymous, 1897a). As no record could be found in the Victorian inquest files (State Coroner's Office), this has been entered as a suicide attempt.

Name Unknown (†ca 1 March 1900), hawker. On a voyage back to India aboard RMS Oroya, the unnamed hawker, who had boarded the vessel at Albany (WA) on 25 February 1900 in the company of four other Punjabi, jumped overboard and refused to avail himself to any of the life buoys thrown at him. At the enquiry aboard ship “it was elicited...that the Hindoo had not eaten or slept during the three previous nights, and that he had spent the whole of that time at his devotions.”(Anonymous, 1900b). The Oroya had been en route to Colombo (Anonymous, 1900a).

Ali, Mahomet († 13 May 1888 at Toowoomba, Qld), a hawker originally from Calcutta, poisoned himself in his rooms at Porter's Hotel with strychnine (Anonymous, 1888) (Qld BDM C3953/1888).

Azeddelle, Ali (†11 October 1894, Strawberry Hills, Redfern, NSW), a draper and cordial manufacturer shot himself (in the head through the chin) with a revolver while in his room at 479 Elizabeth Street, Strawberry Hills. No cause could be ascertained. The deceased was reported to have been in better financial circumstances than the majority of others. (Anonymous, 1894c). One of the papers noted that he recently had been living apart from his wife which may have 'preyed on his mind.' (Anonymous, 1894b).

Barrum, Pine († 5 November 1889 at Melbourne, Vic), aka Painee Pindarrum (Anonymous, 1889c), a juggler employed by the Palace of Amusement (also 'Royal Museum and Palace of Varieties') in Bourke Street, Melbourne) committed suicide by hanging from a peg. The act was probably committed while intoxicated. He was noticed to be “in an excited state talking to himself” and was put to bed by the watchman of the establishment. Barrum’s six-months contract was to expire within four weeks and he was to have returned to India (Anonymous, 1889d). No inquest file located.

Bastine, Charles († 7 July 1921, at Deep Creek, near Baryulgil, NSW), shot himself with a rifle. Inquest found no cause for the action (Anonymous, 1921).

Bukhsh, Nabi (*ca 1848, Aheseyan Rahna, [Gujrat, Pakistan], †9 June 1898 at Bathurst, NSW) Indian oculist ('Nabee Bux'), suicide by arsenic poisoning. Buksh was supposedly to have been heavily in debt, but several money orders to the total of ≤120 dated November 1897 to March 1898 and addressed to different places in India were found among his papers (Anonymous, 1898d).

Chand, Fatta († 27 April 1891 at Melbourne, Vic), 28 year old hawker, had been sentenced to death on 24 March 1891 for the murder of Juggo Mull at Healesville in November 1890, and was executed on 27 April 1891(Anonymous, 1891a). While in jail, Fatta Chand refused to accept food as he wished to starve himself to death (Anonymous, 1891b). To ensure that the death sentence was carried out in an orderly fashion, Chand was force-fed through the nose (Anonymous, 1894a), even though his case had been discussed in the Victorian parliament with some politicians arguing that he ought to be allowed to starve himself to death and spare the public purse the cost of the execution (Anonymous, 1901). It is possible that the attempt was a combination of Prāyaścitta (atonement) and Prayopavesa (voluntary death by starvation) (see also Spennemann, subm.-b).

Deen, Ellam (1 August 1907), 'Adam Dean' (Anonymous, 1907d), attempted to commit suicide by jumping off the town pier at Port Melbourne. “He had been seen about the pier and partly undressing himself. He would give no information concerning himself, beyond giving his name” (Anonymous, 1907c).

Dickson, Frederick (29 December 1903 at Brisbane, Qld), labourer, attempted to drown himself in the Brisbane River. As reason for his attempt, Frederick Dickson, described as 'Hindoo' stated that he had been harassed by both white Australians and South Sea Islanders (Anonymous, 1903c, 1904a). The court declared him insane and sent him to the Goodna Asylum (Anonymous, 1903a).

Ghie, Lalla (†28 June 1916 at Four Mile, Qld), aka Lalla Ghee, was found with his throat cut. Two blood stained knives were found next to the body. On the body money orders to the value of ≤160 were found (Anonymous, 1916) (Qld BDM C3150/1916).

Ishmail, George (31 October 1923, Brisbane, Qld), a farm worker from Roma, attempted suicide by strychnine poisoning in his room at a boarding house in Brisbane. As reasons given he stated that he “was in trouble and wanted to die” (Anonymous, 1923).
'Jimmy' († 20 April 1906 at Breadalbane near Goulburn, NSW). Described as an Afghan in the newspapers. The NSW BDM lists his family name as unknown (5067/1906). ‘Jimmy’ arrived at Raeburn Station (Breadalbane near Goulburn) in the afternoon, requesting cooked food. As this could not be provided at the time, he reputedly went to a location nearby and made a pile comprised of 5–6 tons of wood. He set fire to the stack, danced around the fire and, using a pole, vaulted in and out of the edges of the fire. Once the stack was well alight he vaulted into its centre and was immolated (Anonymous, 1906). In keeping with contemporary practice, when the real cause of the suicide was not readily apparent, the coroner’s verdict explained the suicide as being due to ‘temporary insanity.’

Jury (12 October 1889, Surry Hills, NSW), shop assistant, attempted to cut own throat with a razor inflicting a serious wound. The reason given was he wanted to go to India, but that he could not as his employer, the ‘condiment arranger’ Sulieman Ameen, did not wish to repay him the ≤10 that he had been loaned and instead tried to charge him 10s/week for board and rent. On January 9 1890 he was charged with the crime of attempted suicide (Anonymous, 1890a, 1890b, 1890d) and sentenced on 6 February (Anonymous, 1890c).

Kanane, George (1 November 1889, Maryborough, Vic?), hawker. When caught during a theft, he stabbed himself several times in the abdomen, inflicting a serious wound (Anonymous, 1889a).

Khader (‘Khadhair’), Adbdul († 4 March 1902 at Yarra, Melbourne, Vic) the body of a Hindu was found hanging from a tree at Richmond Park, Yarra. He had strangulated himself with his own waist belt (Anonymous, 1902e). His wife had been jailed in Geelong for larceny and Khader had gone to Melbourne to obtain funds to pay the fine (Anonymous, 1902a).— (State Coroner’s Office, 1902). Vic BDM 2672/1902.— Khadhair was aged 28yrs according to the Vic BDM, but ca 40yrs according to the newspapers (Anonymous, 1902e).

Khan, Cheri († 9 May 1910 near Tallangatta, Vic) at Ormidale Station (near Tallangatta).—presumably Muslim.—Found drowned in Tallangatta Creek near Ormidale Station (Anonymous, 1910a); cause of death drowning presumed to be suicide (Anonymous, 1910c). Khan was found with his turban wound tightly around his neck (Anonymous, 1910b). According to the papers, Khan “lately had been suffering from the hallucination that some-one had told him ‘that he had killed a man’ ” (Anonymous, 1910b).— (State Coroner’s Office, 1910) Vic BM 7271/1910.

Khan, Mis († 31 December 1889 at Anna Creek, SA) 25 year old Mis Khan, a.k.a. Miscarn, a ‘Belooche Indian’, died from “revolver bullet wound self-inflicted” at Algebuckinna. Taken to Anna Creek but died there (Anonymous, 1889b).

Khan, Nathoo († 24 December 1930 at Bathurst, NSW), storekeeper at Yarrobib committed suicide while on remand at Bathurst Goal for attempted murder committed at Yarrobib near Mudgee (NSW). After the shooting incident Khan was taken to Mudgee hospital with a wound in his head until he was well enough to be conveyed to Mudgee Goal. Khan “refused to eat, but showed no signs of insanity or violence” and later attempted suicide as he was found “with the sleeves of his pyjama coat tied round his neck (Anonymous, 1930b). When conveyed from Mudgee to Bathurst by train, Khan tried to jump out of the window. On arrival at Bathurst, Khan struggled “and while being placed in the police van … wilfully bumped his head against the door” (Anonymous, 1930b). The paper noted that “[d] uring the whole of the journey from Mudgee he kept repeating, “I am no good and I want to die” and that he spoke in his own language (Anonymous, 1930b). Khan was found in his cell strangled with “a leather strap tied twice loosely around his neck” (Anonymous, 1930b). According to the inquest “Khan had taken his belt off, and slowly strangled himself to death, showing remarkable determination” It appears that “Khan was in a padded cell in gaol, and his legs were tied” (Anonymous, 1930a).

Khan, Solomon († 4 October 1911, Roseberry, NSW), a hawker, committed suicide by taking strychnine. He was found by a passer-by sitting next to the road at the Roseberry racecourse. Khan told him that he taken strychnine to end his life as he had lost all his money at the races, but was not taken seriously (Anonymous, 1911b). The inquest found that a race programme contained numerous messages written in ‘Hindustani’ that he “felt ashamed for losing his money and ruining himself, so better death than life” (Anonymous, 1911d). Kahn apparently owed a considerable amount of money to a shop keeper (presumably his supplier) (Anonymous, 1911b).

Lewis, Charles (18 July 1898, Sydney, NSW), a cook, attempted to cut own throat with a razor inflicting a serious wound (Anonymous, 1898c). The attempt occurred while intoxicated (Anonymous, 1898a).

Roblin, Maurice († 18 September 1924, Bondi, NSW). After an argument he shot and wounded his erstwhile lover Alma Fennell at her flat at Bondi and then shot and killed himself (Anonymous, 1924a).
Singh, Cara (12 April 1899 at Lismore, NSW). Jumped into deep water off the wharf at Lismore, with his hands tied. The wrap became untied in the water and he swam ashore. According to the newspaper he had been ill and ‘very depressed in mind’ (Anonymous, 1899a). According to the Lismore paper, he had “been sentenced to a mouth’s imprisonment in order to give him attendance, rather than to punish him” (Anonymous, 1899a).

Singh, Chanda (†31 March 1907 at Temora, NSW) (aka. Chunder Singh) Committed suicide by hanging himself in an outhouse of Cheer Singh’s store (Anonymous, 1907b, 1907a), ‘died from a broken neck, caused by hanging, the result of his own act’, his assets were ≤16 file 1907/358 (NSW New South Wales, Australia, Registers of Coroners’ Inquests, 1821-1937).—Cremated (Anonymous, 1907b; Spennemann, 2017, p. 23).

Singh, Goodya (†11 October 1902 at Temora, NSW) Arrived in Temora in August 1902 and distributed his wares for free, liquidated his bank account, purchased feed for various animals. Having disposed of all his assets, Singh retired to his wagon and starved himself to death. It has been argued that this suicide is a case of Sallekhanā as practiced by the Jain (Spennemann, subm.-b).

Singh, Gooram Dabee († 2 November 1897 on Stradbroke Island, Qld)(a.k.a. Goon Dabee Singh; aka Good Dahlee Singh; aka Gooran Daber Singh; aka George Davis), working as a cab driver in Brisbane for at least 30 years, committed suicide (cut own throat) (Anonymous, 1897b). QLD Inquest file JUS/N256 (now file 2734128).

Singh, Hakim (†ca 21 May 1903, Swan Hill, Vic) aka ‘Har Kein Singh.’ Suicide by strychnine poisoning (State Coroner’s Office, 1903) (VIC BDM 7736/1903).—According to the newspapers, Singh had been a farmer at Swan Hill, with 800 acres under seed in 1902, but without a single sheaf of harvest. The suicide was attributed to financial troubles (Anonymous, 1903d). Singh had been sued by a Charles A Guy in the Kerang court in April and September 1902 for outstanding debts for “work and labour done [apparently a land clearing and fencing contract for 344 acres], and goods sold and delivered” (≤88/17/7) (Anonymous, 1902c, 1902b, 1902d).

Singh, Hardit (13 April 1924, Green Creek near Stawell, Vic), hawker. Singh, at the time 57 or 58, attempted to commit suicide in his wagon while camped at Green Creek near Stawell. He had slashed his wrists, had a cut on the forehead (from a tomahawk) and a slight cut to his throat. No reasons stated, but had behaved erratically (Anonymous, 1924b). Died 1945 at Stawell (Vic) aged 79 (Vic BDM 19243/1945).

Singh, Johallah (11 March 1904, Warracknabeal, Vic), hawker, attempted suicide by drowning himself in Yarriambiack Creek near Warracknabeal, but had been observed (from the opposite bank), retrieved and resuscitated. Singh had been in police custody (due to delirium tremens) for three days prior to the event and had just been released (Anonymous, 1904c). In March 1903 Singh had been the primary suspect in the murder of Maha Deen at Miners Rest (Anonymous, 1903b, 1904c).

Singh, Khaim (†14 July 1898 at Mooroopna, Vic), a hawker, working in Victoria for 10 months, left the hospital after having been admitted for a form of inflammation, was found dead in the Goulburn River; the inquest presumed that he committed suicide having drowned himself. A verdict of suicide ‘while temporary insane’ was returned (Anonymous, 1898b; State Coroner’s Office, 1898).—Remains cremated on 19 July 1898 on the banks of the Goulburn River, near Mooroopna (Vic BDM 13329/1898)—Not to be confused with Lanna Singh, working in Victoria for 4 years months who died on 10 July 1898 at Mooroopna hospital; cremated on 12 July 1898 at the junction of the Broken River with the Goulburn River, near Mooroopna (Anonymous, 1898b)(Vic BDM 3969/1898). In the absence of a death certificate information, these two were commingled in Spennemann (2017, p. 21).

Singh, Khishan (1 December 1899 at Casterton, Vic) aka Kissin Singh, attempted suicide in the dam behind the flour mill (Anonymous, 1899b).

Singh, Kishin († ca 19 October 1911, Merino, Vic) aka. Kishn Singh (Anonymous, 1911a). Suicide by drowning in the Crawford (Smoky) River (State Coroner’s Office, 1911). The newspaper reported that he “had been about Hotspur for the past few days, and was reported to have been of rather eccentric demeanour” (Anonymous, 1911a). Cremated at Merino Cemetery by a Kissin Singh (of Casterton) (Anonymous, 1911c).

Singh, Lal (†25 January 1929 at Moulamein, NSW) Committed suicide (aided by intoxication) by jumping off the bridge and drowning himself in the Edward River (Anonymous, 1929a, 1929b). He had been drinking heavily for the past few weeks. Recovered from 10ft of water (Anonymous, 1929c), he was cremated on the banks of the Edward River, opposite the Mooloomoon woolshed, by three fellow traders with a crowd of 100 onlookers (Anonymous, 1929a, 1929d).—
of death ‘asphyxia by drowning, own act’ file 1929/272 (NSW New South Wales, Australia, Registers of Coroners’ Inquests, 1821-1937).—(Spennemann, 2017, p. 29).

Singh, Masivi ‘Basawa’ († 25 October 1896 at Adelaide, SA) [Figure 1], suicide while in police custody, having been committed for trial for attempted murder on a fellow Punjabi. Even though according to the inquest there was nothing unusual about his behaviour, Singh was evidently seen as a suicide risk as his “turban, braces and every other article with which it seemed possible he might do himself an injury were taken away from him” (Anonymous, 1896a). Singh had made a rope out of his towel and handkerchief.

Figure 1: Massivi Singh (Anonymous, 1896b)

Singh, Patarp (*ca. 1868 Jullundur, †29 September 1951 at Henty, NSW). In May 1950, Patarp “was found in a state of collapse at his camp in Henty … [and] admitted to the Henty District Hospital” (Selk and Wild, 1951). It seems that he had suffered a stroke, resulting in partial paralysis (Anonymous, 1951a). The inquest found that Partap Singh had set his hut in Smart Street alight in order to be cremated according to custom. It appeared that on the day of his death, he had placed a three-foot high stack of wood in his hut, which was, according to the inquest, the normal height of a funeral pyre. It appears that Partap Singh read the death ceremony to himself before setting fire to the hut and cutting his own throat. Once alight, the hut burnt down completely. (Anonymous, 1951b, 1951c).

Singh, Prem (‘Argen’) (†5 November 1905 at Yarram, Vic). Drowned himself in Tarra Creek. The body was recovered by dragging. He was found with his legs tied together, while his clothes were found at the bank (Anonymous, 1905c). According to the newspapers he had assets of over ≤300 in the bank and had recently communicated by telegram with India. The paper attributed the suicide to the fact that he had “recently lost his bundle in the bush and, brooding over the loss, committed suicide” (Anonymous, 1905b). He left a suicide note in ‘Hindustani’ (Anonymous, 1905c), which was translated and reprinted by the Melbourne Age (Anonymous, 1905a) (for partial transcription, see Figure 2) (State Coroner’s Office, 1905) (Vic BDM 14687/1905).

Figure 2: Example of a newspaper entry. The suicide of Prem Singh on 4 November 1905
Singh, Soondah (†17 Mar 1920, Sunbury, Vic) aka Gundah Singh. Found in a paddock at Woorndoo near Terang with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the throat (State Coroner’s Office, 1920) (Vic BDM 2967/1920) (Anonymous, 1920). A double-barrelled shot gun with one barrel empty was found beside the body. Singh’s wagon “fully loaded with drapery and other goods, was found half a mile away” (Anonymous, 1920).

Singh, Sundah (a.k.a. Black Charley; a.k.a. Santa Singh) (†early July 1904 at Poontina, an outstation of Parallana Run, SA). ‘Black Charley’ a hawker, shot himself with his own rifle. Was reputedly “well and favourably known in this district” (Anonymous, 1904b). Correlation with the SA BDM records shows this must be Sundah Singh, the only Hindu to die in the wider region in July 1904.

Singh, Sunner (†15 September 1926 at Tintenbar, NSW) committed suicide by hanging (by a plough line) in a locked hut on a property at Tintenbar, where Singh had been camping with a fellow Punjabi, Baby Ditto (Anonymous, 1926a, 1926b).

Figure 2: Map showing the locations mentioned in the text

COMMENTS ON COMPARATIVE SUICIDE RATES

To put the Punjabi suicides into context, we need to compare the frequency of suicides among the Punjabi men with the male suicides in the general population. While we have in hand some immigrant statistics e.g.,[27], we do not have accurate data on the total number of Punjabi living in the various Australian colonies/states at any one time. An approximation of standardised suicide rates (as expressed in suicides per 100,000 people) is prone to numerous constraints that make the resulting data highly unreliable. There are two possible approaches to approximation. The first approach draws on the census data which detail the places of birth of those enumerated (Knibbs, 1914, p. 110f; Wickens, 1925, p. 45; Wilson, 1933, p. 728) and scales them up to 100,000 and the resulting proportion to scale the observed number of suicides. The problem with these data is that they enumerate all born in British India, which also includes people of European descent. The second approach uses religious affiliation and draws on those enumerated as Brahmin, Hindu and Sikh, as well as Muslim. The latter number is inflated, however, it is geographically independent and will enumerate people of Arabian and Middle Eastern origin as well. While it is possible to derive proportions between Muslim and Hindu/Sikh based on recorded names of immigrants, these properties are not stable over time and thus add unquantifiable margins of error.

Detailed data exist for the colony (and later state) of Victoria, that allow us to examine the proportion of suicides both in percent of the total deaths and in percent of inquests conducted. The Victorian data are a combination of the of the death
data for Punjabi as derived from family name searches of the births, deaths and marriages database (Victoria Justice and Regulation, 2017); (for methodology see Spennemann, in prep) and the database of all coronial inquests (Public Records Office Victoria, 1853–1939). The data for the general Victorian population draw on the same sources but do not use name-specific searches. As the suicide data are derived from the coronial inquest database, they are not gender separated.

For New South Wales we can only develop such data for the Punjabi population. The NSW data are a combination of the death data for Punjabi as derived from family name searches of the births, deaths and marriages database (NSW Justice, 2017; for methodology see Spennemann, in prep) and the database of all coronial inquests (NSW Attorney General and Justice, 1821-1937). The NSW births, deaths and marriages database does not permit to extract annual total that could be used to develop a state/colony wide picture as could be developed for Victoria.

Detailed data exist for the colony (and later state) of Victoria, that allow us to examine the proportion of suicides both in percent of the total deaths and in percent of inquests conducted [Table 5]. For New South Wales we can only develop such data for the Punjabi population [Table 6].

| Table 5: Total number of deaths, inquests and verdicts of suicide in Victoria, 1840-1939 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Date range | All of Victoria |  |  |  | Punjabi only |  |  |
| Date range | Deaths | Inquests | Suicides | Suicides in % | Suicides | Inquests | Suicides | Suicides in % |
| 1840-1849 | 4,836 | 845 | 43 | 0.89 | 5.09 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| 1850-1859 | 56,137 | 10,034 | 355 | 0.63 | 3.54 | 11 | 3 | - | - | - | - |
| 1860-1869 | 108,015 | 15,239 | 405 | 0.37 | 2.66 | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | - |
| 1870-1879 | 122,702 | 15,629 | 547 | 0.45 | 3.50 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1880-1889 | 146,875 | 16,096 | 826 | 0.56 | 5.13 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 16.67 | 25.00 | - | - |
| 1890-1899 | 168,169 | 16,221 | 591 | 0.35 | 3.64 | 39 | 16 | 1 | 2.70 | 6.25 | - | - |
| 1900-1909 | 153,138 | 13,605 | 653 | 0.43 | 4.80 | 39 | 13 | 2 | 5.13 | 15.38 | - | - |
| 1910-1919 | 160,995 | 12,657 | 566 | 0.35 | 4.47 | 39 | 15 | 2 | 5.13 | 13.33 | - | - |
| 1920-1929 | 167,105 | 14,274 | 1,288 | 0.77 | 9.02 | 40 | 7 | 1 | 2.56 | 14.29 | - | - |
| 1930-1939 | 183,386 | 16,120 | 1,223 | 0.67 | 7.59 | 66 | 11 | - | - | - | - |
| Long Term | 1271446 | 130732 | 6497 | 0.51 | 4.97 | 240 | 73 | 7 | 2.92 | 9.59 | - | - |

| Table 6: Total number of deaths, inquests and verdicts of Punjabi suicides in NSW, 1840-1939 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Date range | Punjabi only |  |  |
| Date range | Deaths | Inquests | Suicides | Suicides in % |
| 1840-1849 | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| 1850-1859 | 4 | 1 | - | - |
| 1860-1869 | 5 | 1 | - | - |
| 1870-1879 | 2 | - | - | - |
| 1880-1889 | 8 | - | - | - |
| 1890-1899 | 44 | 9 | 2 | 4.55 | 22.22 |
| 1900-1909 | 50 | 11 | 2 | 4.00 | 18.18 |
| 1910-1919 | 65 | 7 | 1 | 1.54 | 14.29 |
| 1920-1929 | 77 | 8 | 2 | 2.60 | 25.00 |
| 1930-1939 | 97 | 16 | 1 | 1.03 | 6.25 |
| Long term | 354 | 54 | 8 | 2.26 | 14.81 |

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