



Media Release

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Tragic events - likelihood vs reality

In new research recently commissioned by NobleOak Life Limited (NobleOak) to determine how Australians rated the likelihood of different events occurring and how this compared to reality.

Anthony Brown, CEO of NobleOak, said "When it comes to people's fears we wanted to find out how these compared to the likelihood of the events occurring. Fear of getting cancer again stood out as the major concern for respondents."

The research¹, commissioned by NobleOak and conducted amongst over 1,000 Australians in December 2018, asked respondents to rate their greatest fears. The results were then compared to the likelihood of the events occurring, using published statistics from various sources.

Similar to last year's survey, the results showed that respondents nominated the top four in order of likelihood as cancer, heart attack, car accident and stroke.

The main difference in this year's survey is that respondents ranked the likelihood of dying from Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's or Dementia as being lower compared to 2017. This is despite the fact that Alzheimer's and Dementia is the second biggest cause of death in Australia.

Mr Brown continued, "Cancer continues to dominate as the number one likelihood in our research conducted in 2016, 2017 and again in 2018. This is contrary to the fact that coronary heart disease is the number one cause of death."

Not surprisingly, dying from a terrorist attack, being hit by lightning and being attacked by a shark were seen as the least likely events to occur.

¹ Research conducted by Pureprofile in December 2018 with 1,043 Australian respondents.



Table 1. Likelihood of Event

Rank the following events in order of likelihood to happen to someone like you in the future (1 is most likely to happen, 10 is least likely to happen)

	Score*	Overall Rank
Cancer	8443	1
Heart attack	8380	2
Car accident	8065	3
Stroke	7603	4
Premature death through a health issue	6963	5
Angioplasty (surgical repair or unblocking of a blood vessel)	6902	6
Parkinsons disease, Alzheimer's or Dementia	6585	7
Plane crash	4489	8
Terrorist attack	4217	9
Lightening strike	3770	10
Shark attack	3421	11

Total Respondents 1043

*Score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is the sum of all weighted rank counts.

Perception versus reality

While the chief concerns are health-related, the findings show a mismatch between perception and reality.

Two in particular stand out:

1. The overwhelming fear Australians have of cancer even though the disease is ranked fourth in the Australia Bureau of Statistics (ABS), statistics (malignant neoplasm of trachea) on leading causes of death – behind heart disease, dementia and cerebrovascular diseases.
2. The high, and growing, incidence of dementia in the ageing Australian population is underestimated. While dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australia, according to the ABS, respondents placed it at seventh in 2018, compared to sixth place in 2017.

The top four leading causes of death for Australians are shown in Table 2 below compared to the ranking by respondents.

Table 2. Leading causes of death 2016

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Leading Causes of Death (ABS)	Rank ABS	Rank NobleOak Research
Ischaemic heart diseases (120-125)	1	2
Dementia , including Alzheimer disease (F01, F03, G30)	2	7
Cerebrovascular diseases (I60-I69)e.g. stroke	3	4
Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung (C33, C34) e.g. lung cancer	4	1

Respondents also ranked car accidents at number 3, however there are much fewer deaths from fatal crashes compared to other leading causes.

According to federal government figures, there were 1,226 deaths resulting from car accidents in 2017, compared to 19,077 deaths from ischaemic heart disease.

Other less likely causes of death for Australians are outlined in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Other causes of deaths with lower likelihood

Ranking	Event (<i>Refer to Key below</i>)	Average Australian deaths per annum
1	Suicide	3,027
2	Car accident	1,226
3	Plane crash	37
4	Lightning strike	5-10
5	Shark attack	3
6	Terrorist attack	3

Despite a number of recent high profile global terror attacks, terrorism still ranks quite low on the list of people’s concerns. Terror attacks ranked 9th in the list of traumatic events in 2016, 2017 and again in 2018.

Mr Brown continued, “It is concerning that more people do not understand the risks associated with aging. With projections indicating the number of people aged 80 and over will double in the next 20 years, there is a very real possibility that that dementia will become the leading cause of death.

More needs to be done to educate people about these risks. There are more than 400,000 people suffering from dementia in Australia with more than half being women. It is also the leading cause of death amongst women.

In addition, many people do not know that Life Insurance and Trauma insurance provides cover for dementia.

Sources:

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australia's leading causes of death, 2016
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2. Lifeline: Statistics on Suicide in Australia.
<https://www.lifeline.org.au/about-lifeline/lifeline-information/statistics-on-suicide-in-australia>
3. Road trauma Australia 2017 statistical summary.
https://bitre.gov.au/publications/ongoing/files/Road_Trauma_Australia_2017III.pdf
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5. Australian Shark Attack File. <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2015/02/10/how-many-people-do-sharks-kill-australia-each-year>
6. Australian Bureau of Statistics. Average annual deaths between 1978 and 2014.
<http://theaimn.com/suicide-domestic-violence-and-terrorism-the-cost/>
7. Dementia statistics. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/dementia-statistics>

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About NobleOak Life Limited

NobleOak Life Limited (NobleOak), is one of Australia's most established life insurers, and has been in the Australian market for over 140 years. NobleOak provides Life, TPD, Trauma, Income Protection and Business Expenses insurance.

NobleOak keeps costs low by providing fully underwritten cover, passing any savings back to their clients through reduced premiums, supported by outstanding personal service.

NobleOak is an Australian public unlisted company regulated by APRA, with products backed by a leading global reinsurer, Hannover Life Re. For more information visit www.nobleoak.com.au

NobleOak has a client satisfaction rating of 95% (2018 client survey) and is the winner of the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Canstar 5 Star Awards for both Premium Life Direct cover and Income Protection.

NobleOak was the winner of the Life Insurance Company of the Year from the RFI Group Australian Insurance Awards 2018 and received the award for Life Insurance Product - Innovation of the Year for its online calculator.

In addition, NobleOak received the Strategic Insights Overall Direct Life Insurance Excellence Award for 2018 and was a finalist for the Term Life, Trauma – Rider and Trauma award. In 2018 NobleOak received the Gold Trusted Service Award from Feefo in 2018.





Media Enquiries

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