

REPORT ON WEEKLY DEATHS IN SOUTH AFRICA

1 JANUARY –
29 DECEMBER 2020
(WEEK 52)

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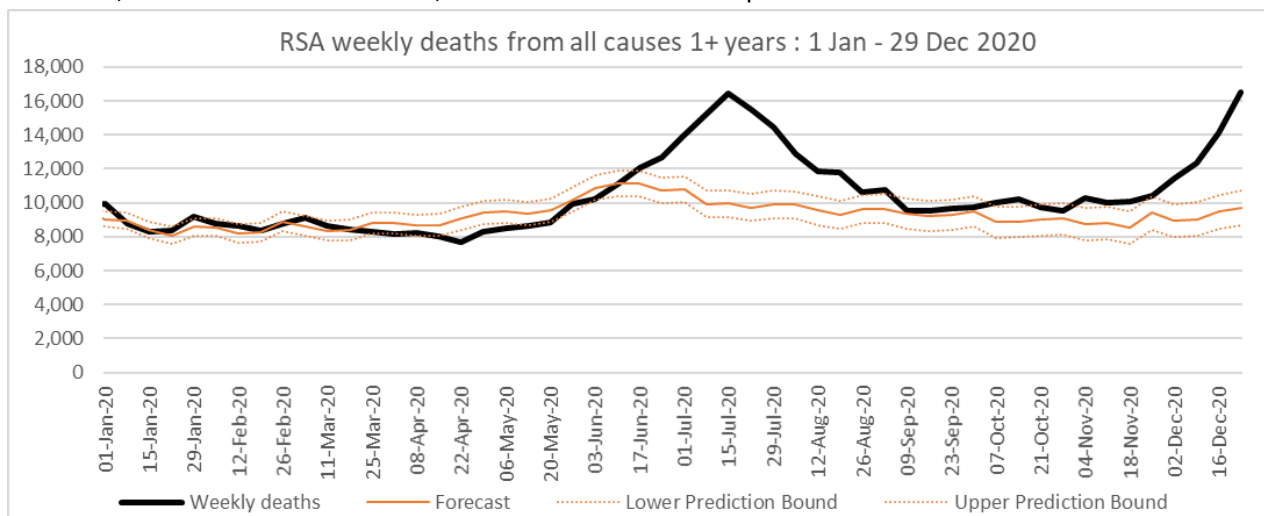
Burden of Disease Research Unit
South African Medical Research Council
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UCT Centre
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Trends

- The weekly number of deaths of persons 1+ years of age from all causes continued to increase in the week **23 - 29 Dec** with the country experiencing a record number of **16,532** deaths in a single week.
- During the week including Christmas the number of natural deaths exceeded the predicted number by **84%**, resulting in an excess of **6,974** deaths from natural causes among persons 1+ years.
- During the period, **6 May – 29 December 2020**, there have been a total of **71,778** excess deaths from natural causes of persons 1+ years old, using the revised base accounting for lower mortality during lockdown. For people 1-59 years the excess is **25,292** and **44,482** for people 60+ years.
- Deaths from natural causes in the **Eastern Cape** have continued to increase slowly with **2,069** excess natural deaths experienced in the week **23 - 29 Dec** compared to **2,013** in the previous week and may be showing the early signs of turning. The numbers of deaths in the 2nd wave is considerably higher than the number of excess natural deaths that occurred in the peak of the 1st wave in the province (**1,597**).
- Natural deaths in **Nelson Mandela Bay** have continued to decrease and the 2nd wave in **Buffalo City** is showing signs of peaking but has not yet turned.
- **KwaZulu Natal** has experienced a rapid increase in natural deaths. The number of excess natural deaths in the week of **23 – 29 Dec** reached a record high of **2,052** (fast approaching double compared with **1,306** at the peak of the 1st wave). The number of deaths from natural causes in **eThekweni** has also increased rapidly reaching **651** excess natural deaths, considerably higher than the peak of the 1st wave when there were **363** excess deaths.
- Natural deaths in the **Western Cape** have continued to increase rapidly, with **950** excess natural deaths occurring during the week of Christmas. There are indications of a slow-down in the increase, but the number of deaths is more than 50% higher than the peak of the 1st wave (**601**). The number of natural deaths in the **City of Cape Town** has also increased rapidly with a record number of excess deaths.
- Deaths from natural causes have increased in **Gauteng** in the past two weeks. There were more than double the number of excess deaths in the past week (**838**) compared to the week before (**401**). Similar upticks have been experienced in the **City of Johannesburg**, **Ekhuruleni** and the **City of Tshwane**.
- Increases natural deaths have been experienced across all of the remaining provinces.
- The weekly number of deaths from unnatural causes in the week **23 – 29 Dec** was below the predicted number, as it was the week before, but still above the lower prediction bound.



Numbers have been scaled to the estimated actual number of death and for the last week has been adjusted for delayed registrations

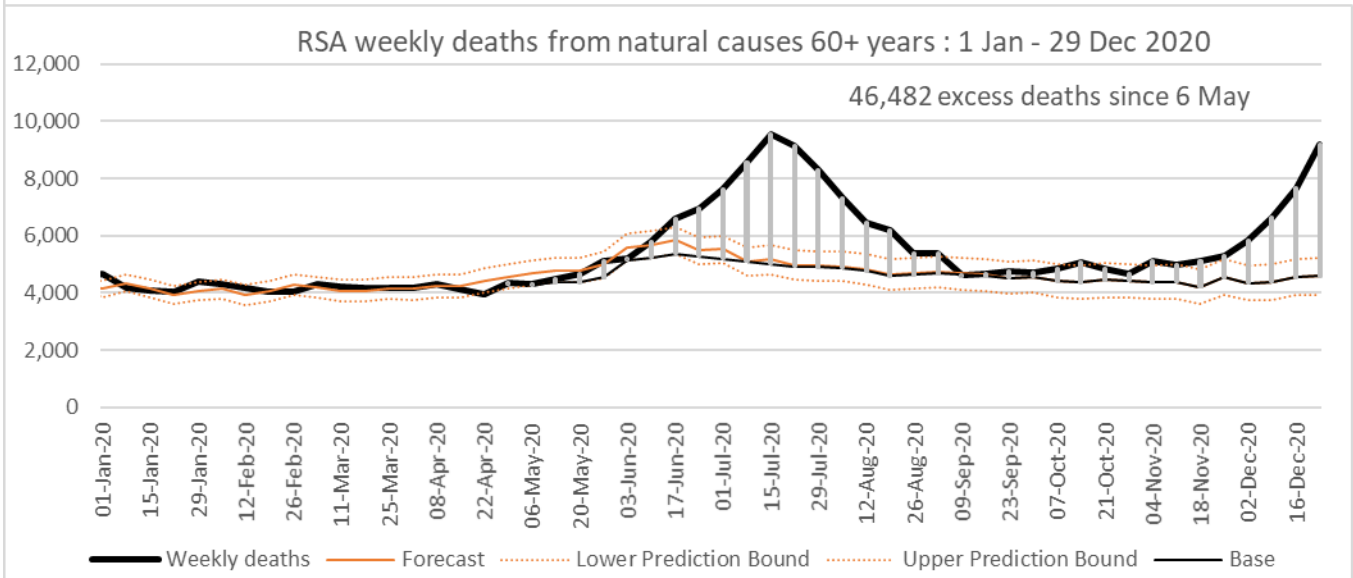
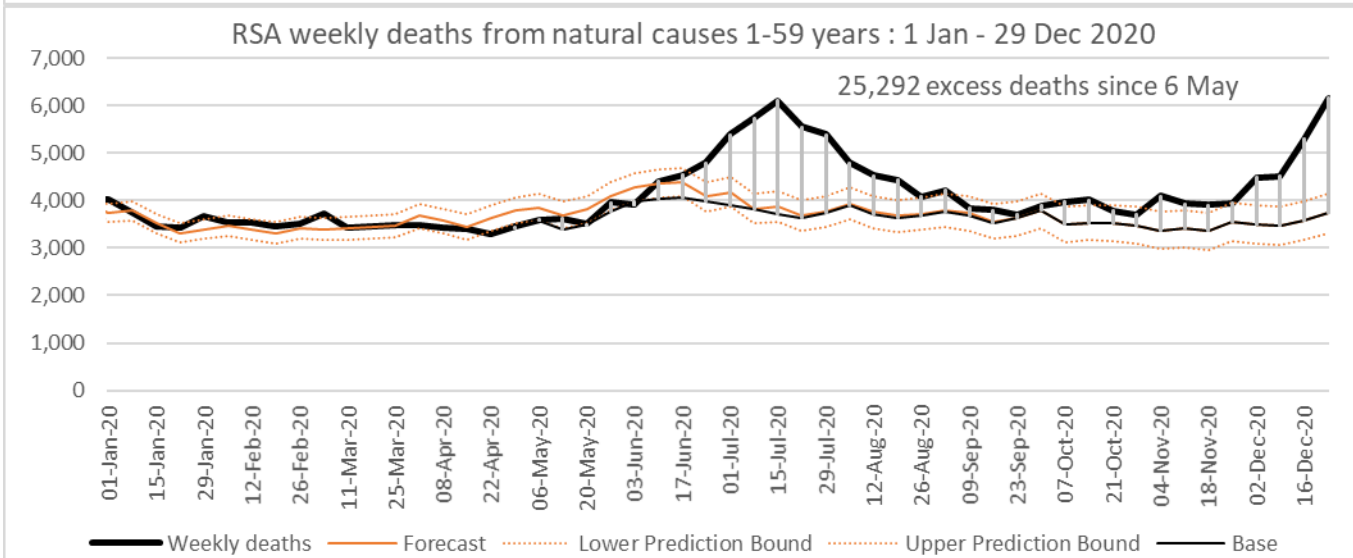
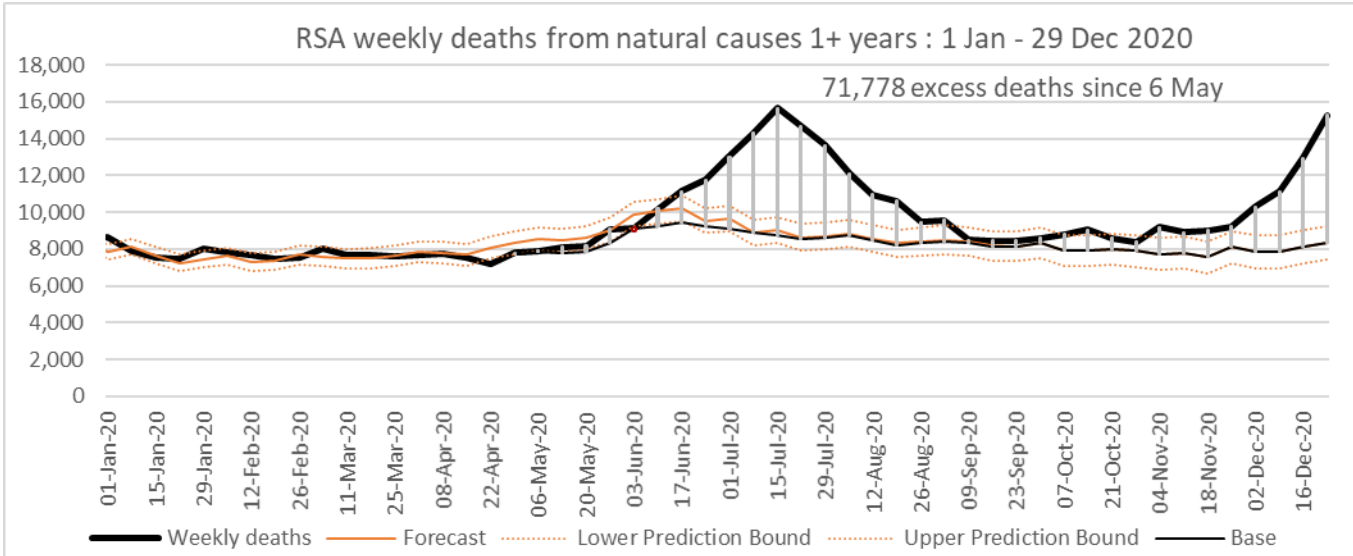
Table 1: Number of excess natural deaths of persons 1+ years by province and metro relative to revised predicted number based on the observed drop during lockdown, South Africa 2020

Region	Period	Excess deaths vs revised base
South Africa	6 May – 29 December	71,778
Province		
Eastern Cape	3 June – 29 December	22,530
Free State	24 June – 29 December	5,088
Gauteng	10 June – 29 December	14,110
KwaZulu-Natal	10 June – 29 December	11,894
Limpopo	24 June – 29 December	2,325
Mpumalanga	24 June – 29 December	3,338
Northern Cape	1 July – 29 December	1,964
North West	1 July – 29 December	3,110
Western Cape	6 May – 29 December	9,768
Metropolitan Municipality		
Buffalo City	3 June – 29 December	2,677
City of Cape Town	6 May – 29 December	6,736
Ekhuruleni	10 June – 29 December	4,042
eThekweni	17 June – 29 December	2,952
Johannesburg	10 June – 29 December	4,651
Mangaung	24 June – 29 December	1,223
Nelson Mandela Bay	3 June – 29 December	4,583
City of Tshwane	10 June – 29 December	2,718

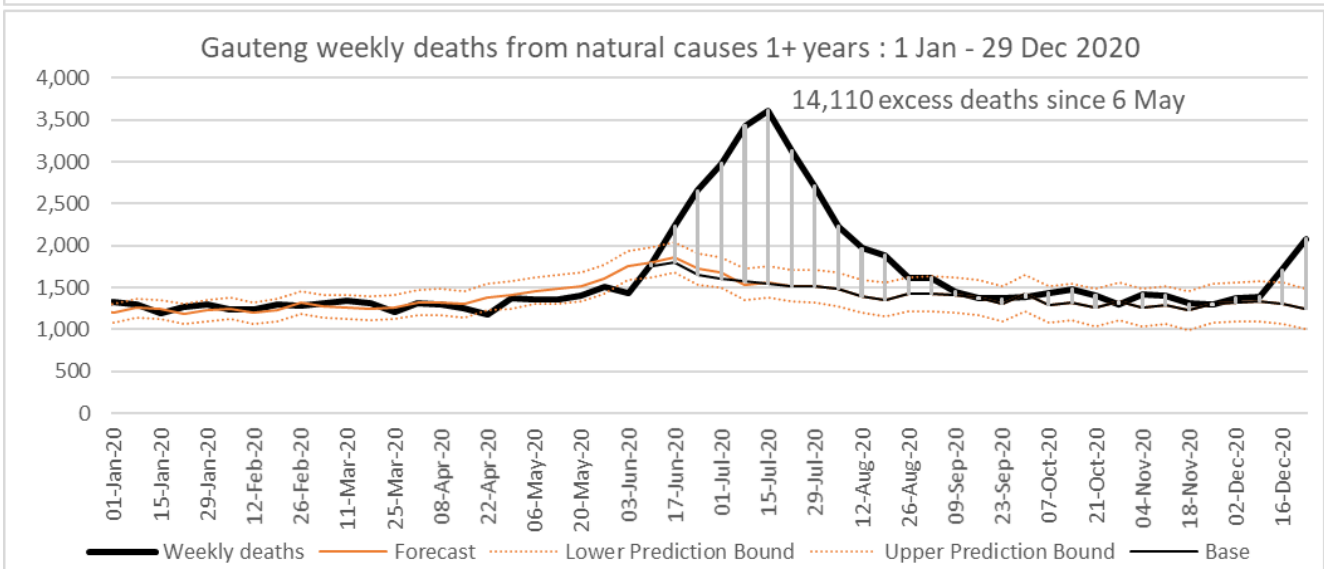
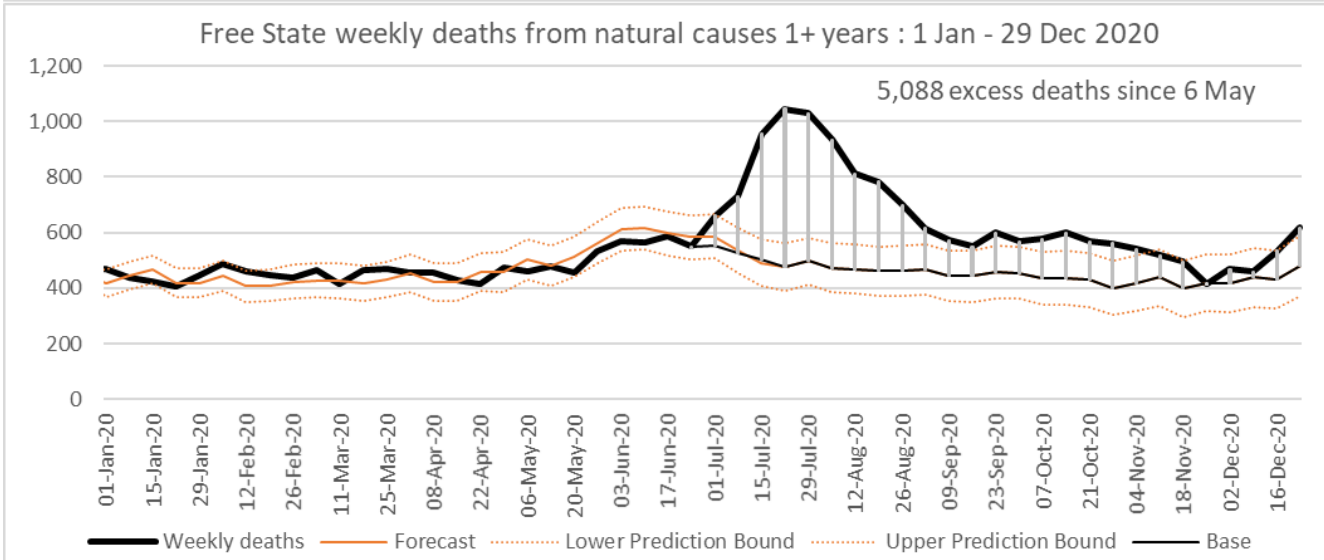
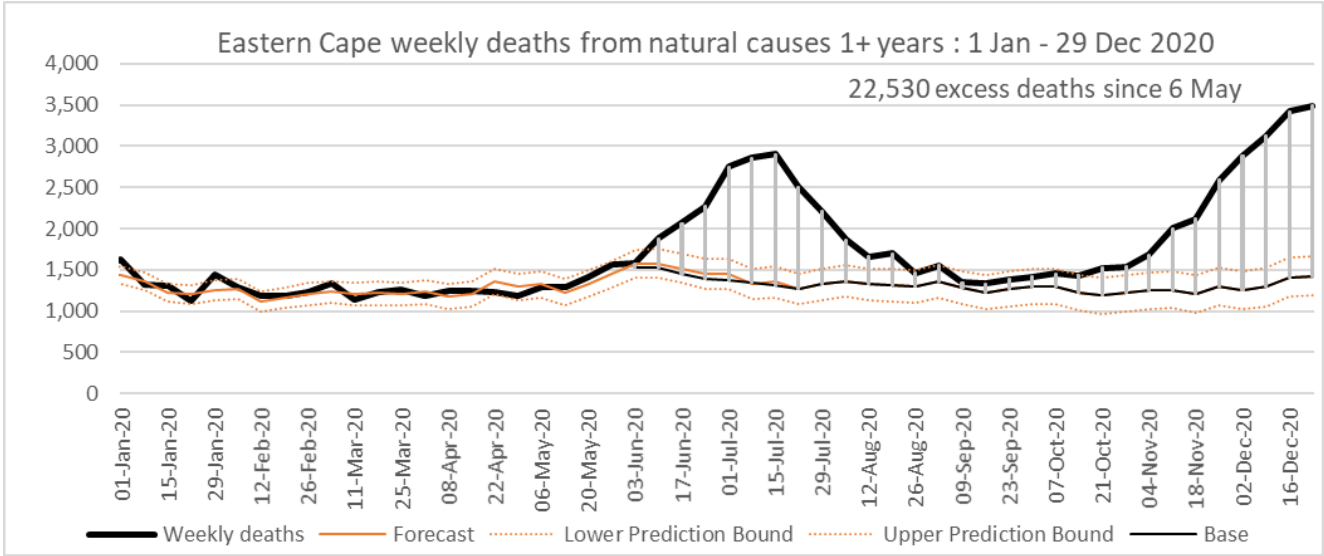
Note: Period has been determined based on when an upturn in the number of natural deaths became apparent. Parts do not sum to the whole because office closures due to Covid-19 may have led to registration of deaths at other offices which may not be in the same area, and random fluctuation at the point at which the baseline is determined.

Table 2: Number of excess deaths from all causes of persons 1+ years by province and metro relative to predicted number based on historical trend, South Africa 2020

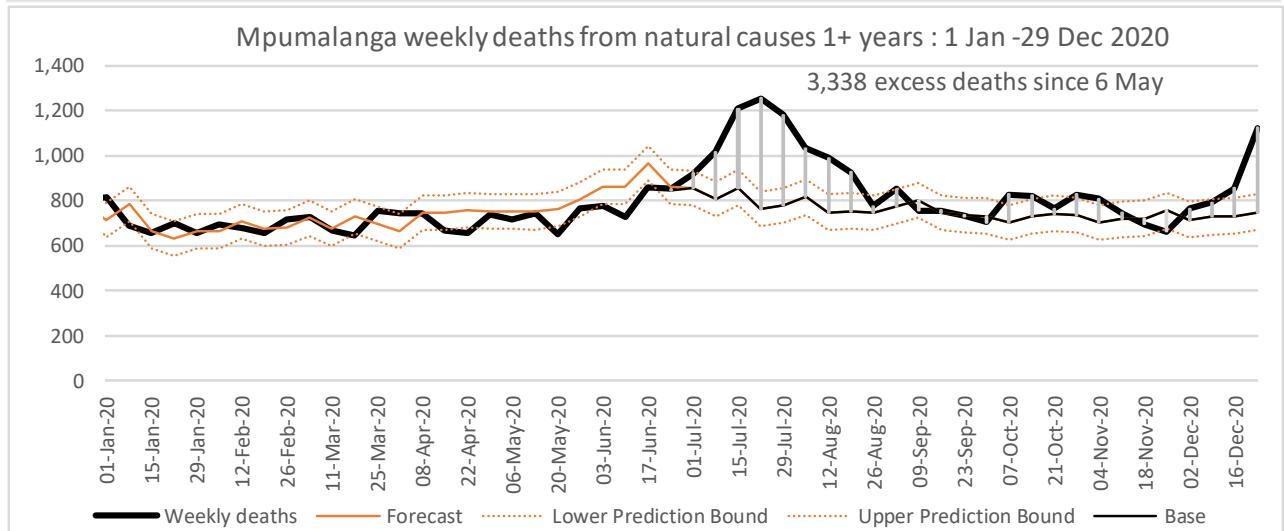
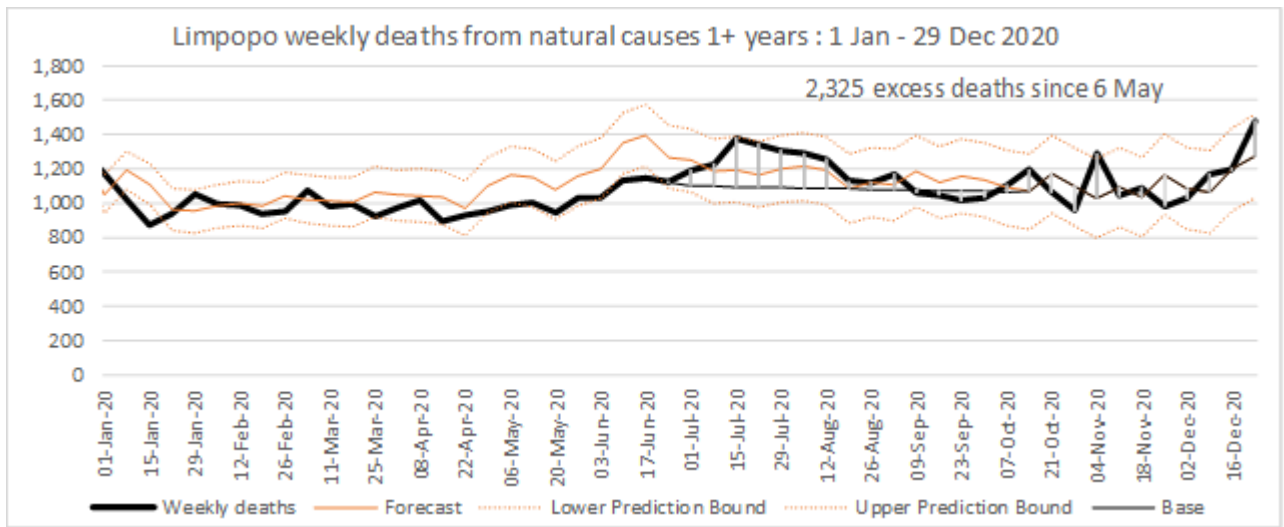
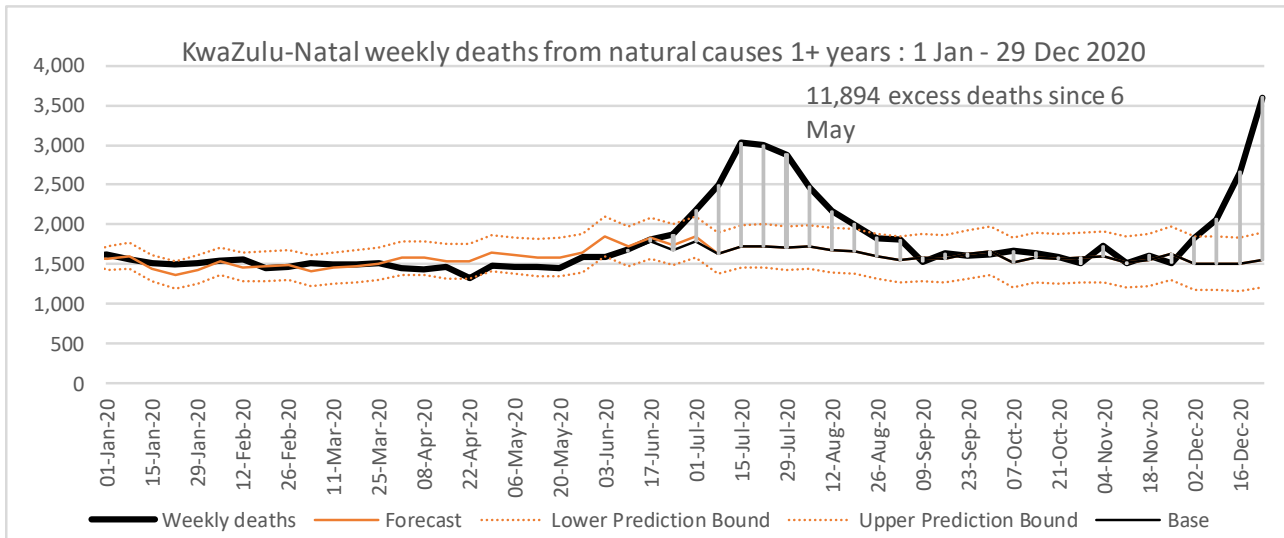
Region	Excess deaths vs forecast
South Africa	65,594
Province	
Eastern Cape	22,280
Free State	5,152
Gauteng	13,350
KwaZulu-Natal	11,155
Limpopo	1,442
Mpumalanga	3,185
Northern Cape	2,042
North West	3,460
Western Cape	8,548
Metropolitan Municipality	
Buffalo City	2,628
City of Cape Town	5,089
Ekhuruleni	3,517
eThekweni	2,853
Johannesburg	4,492
Mangaung	1,222
Nelson Mandela Bay	4,359
City of Tshwane	2,716



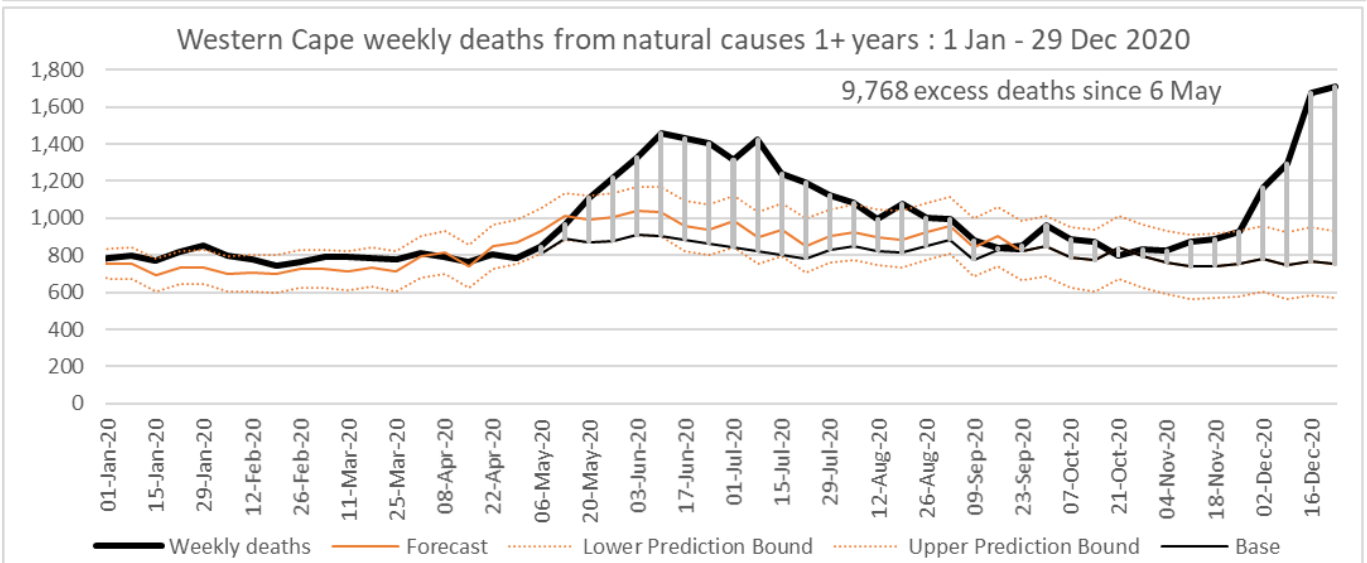
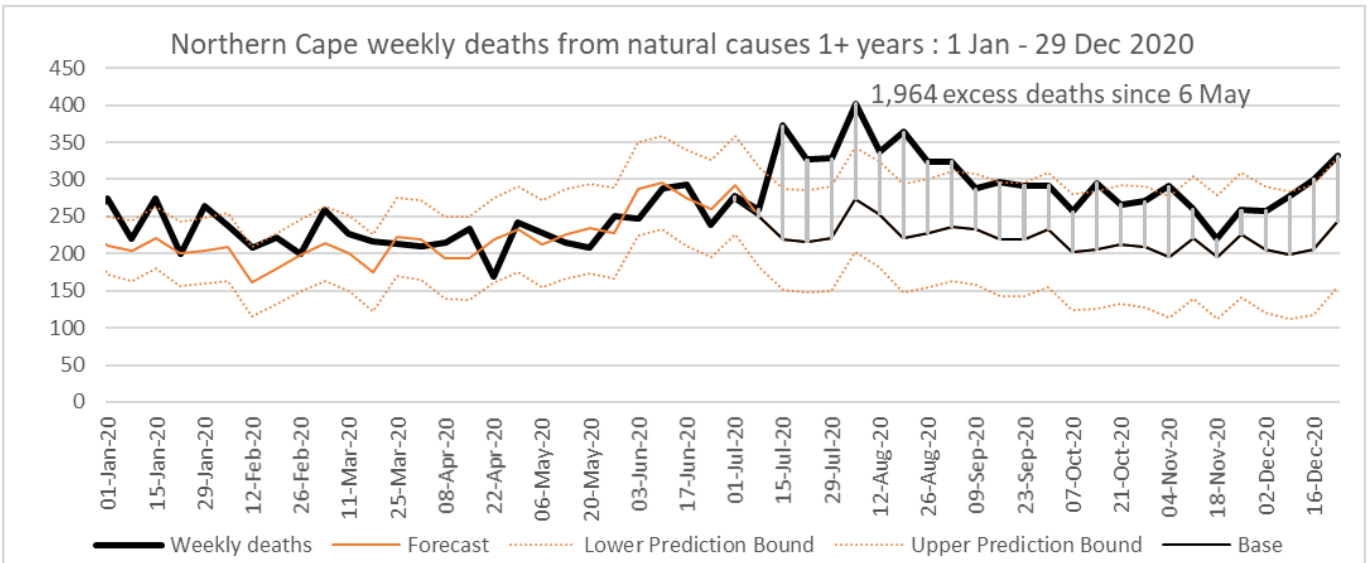
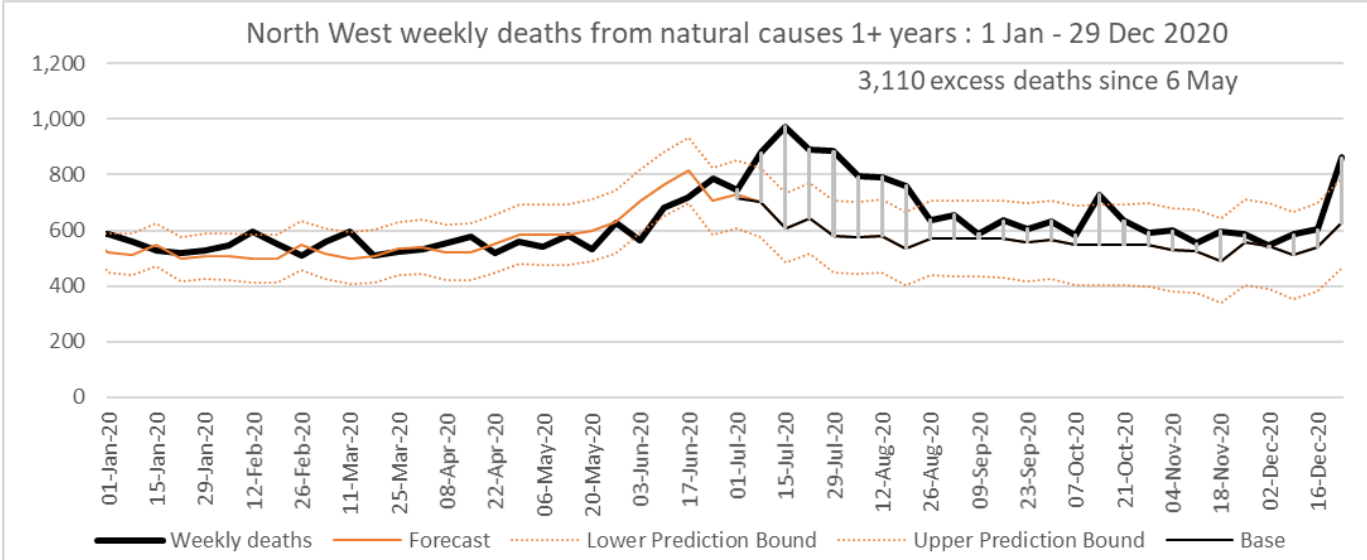
Numbers have been scaled to the estimated actual number of death and for the last week has been adjusted for delayed registrations



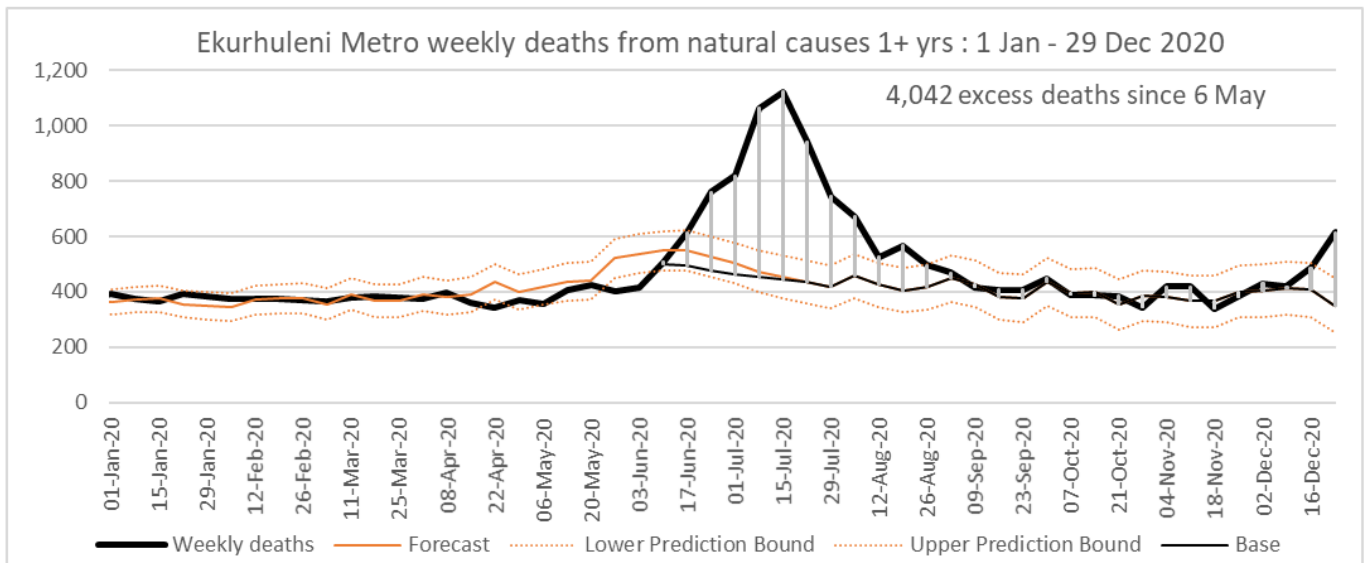
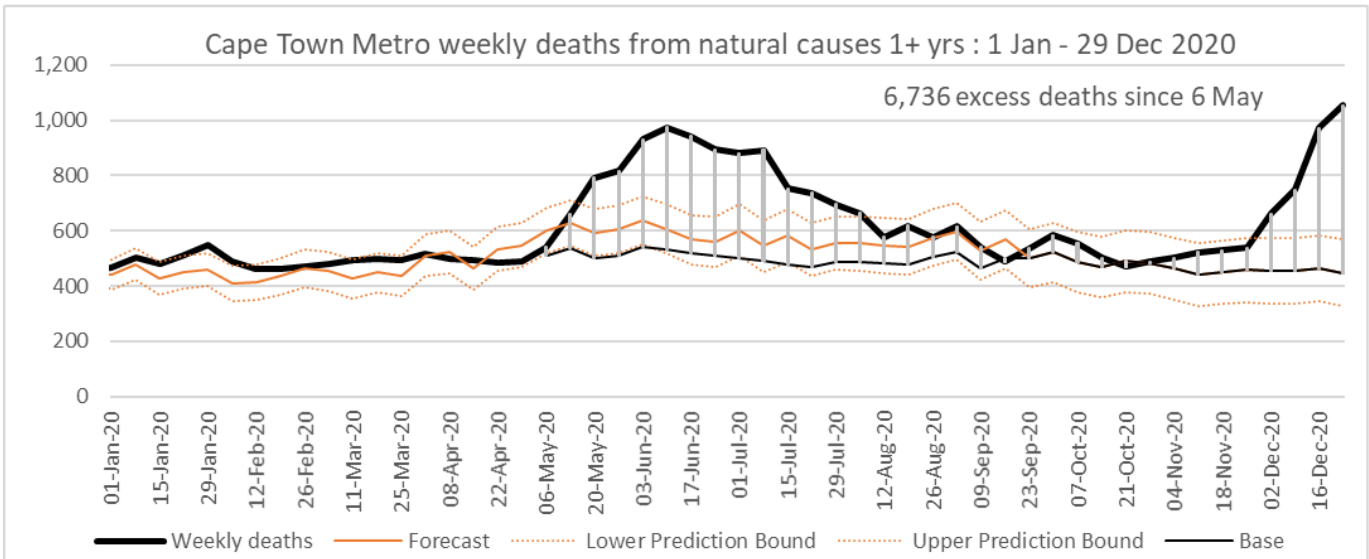
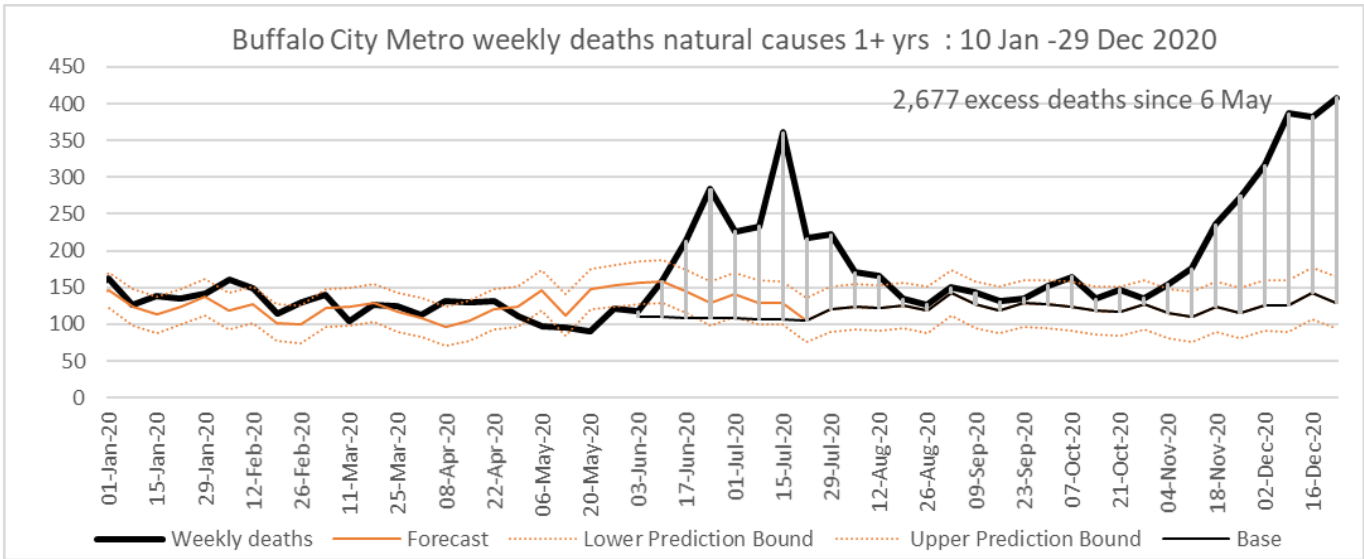
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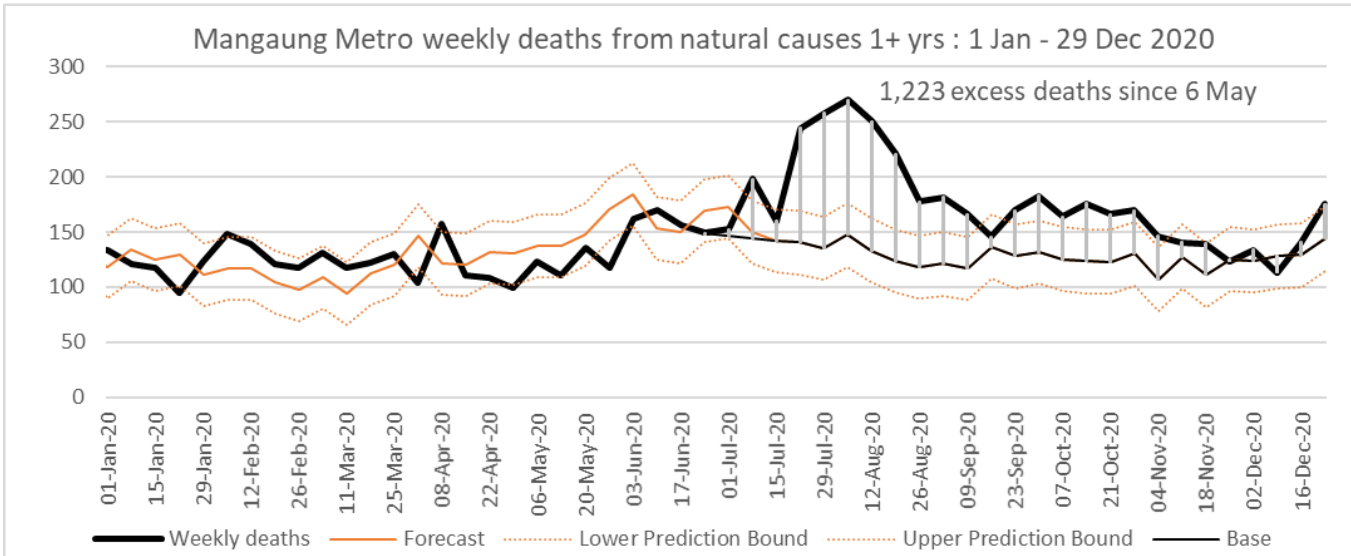
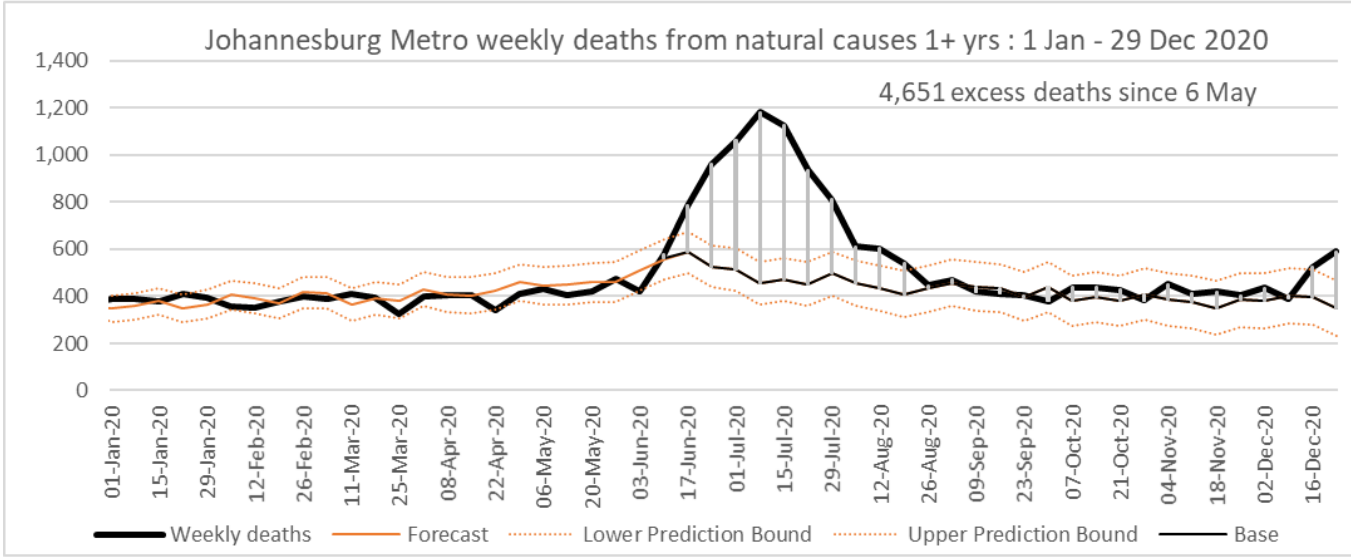
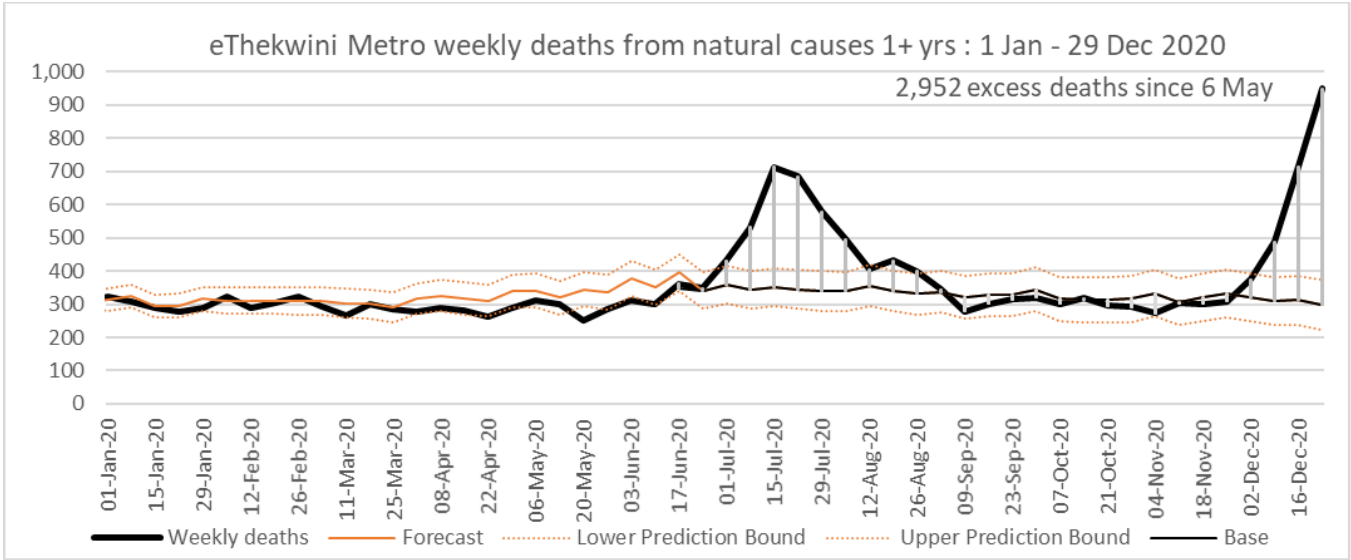
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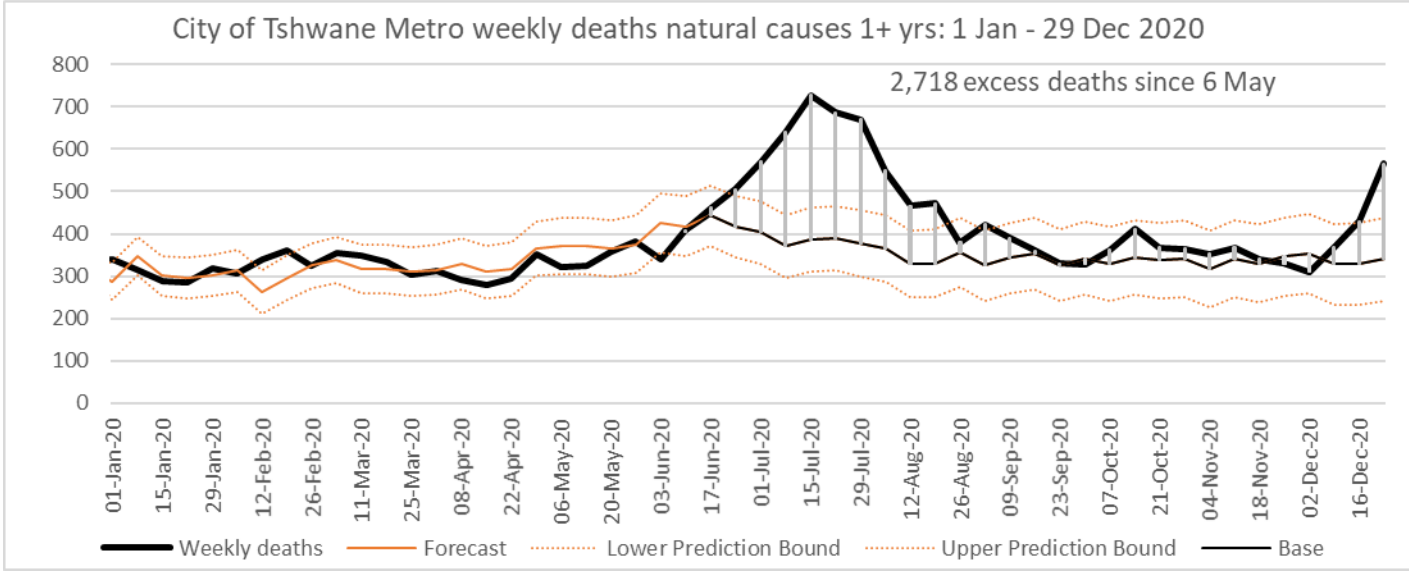
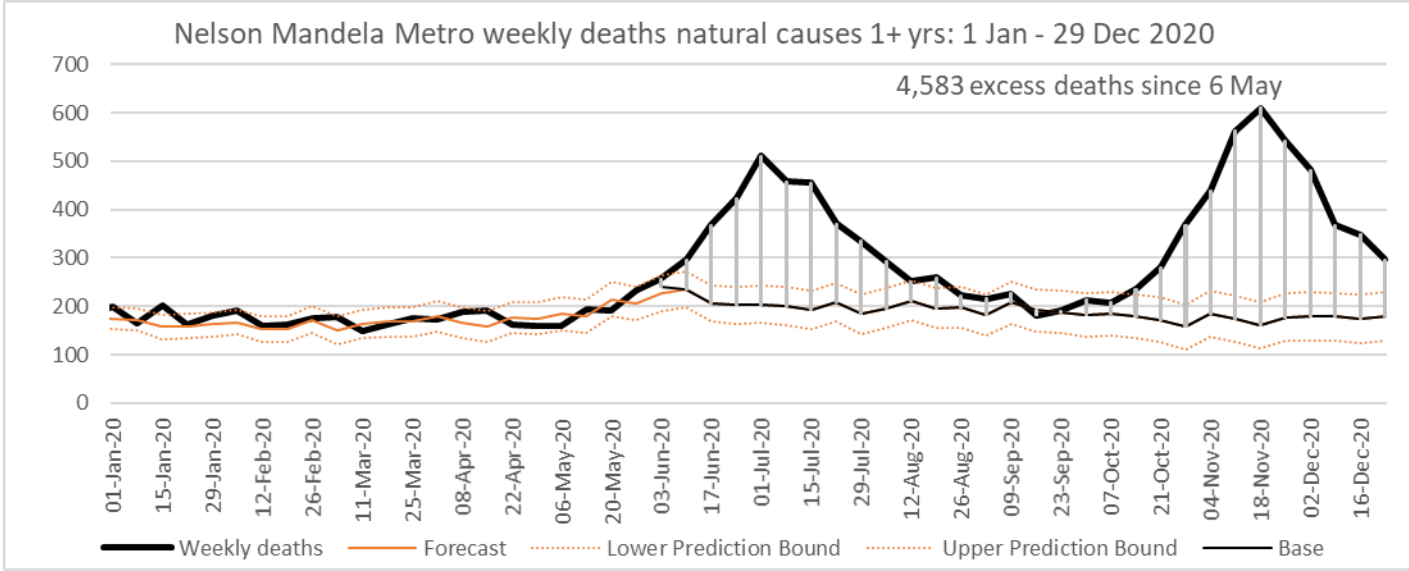
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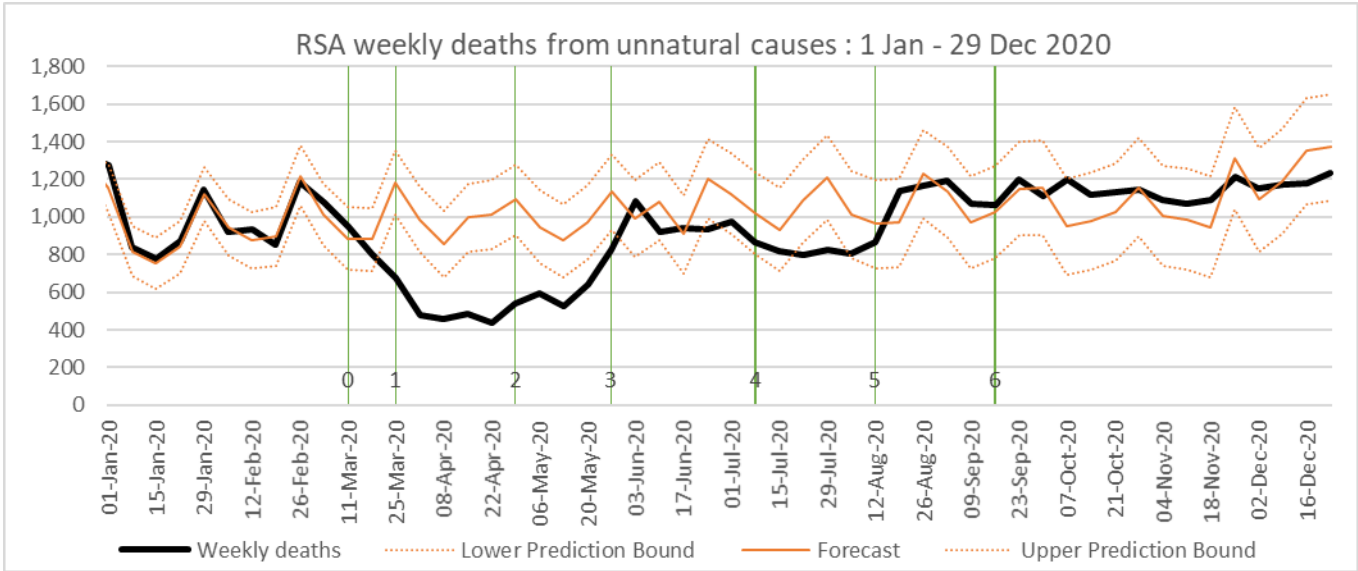
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Vertical lines in order

- 0 Week Disaster Management Act implemented
- 1 Week lockdown level 5 introduced
- 2 Week lockdown changed to level 4, with curfew
- 3 Week lockdown changed to level 3 including unbanning of alcohol
- 4 Week alcohol re-banned and a curfew re-introduced
- 5 Week lockdown changed to level 2, including unbanning of alcohol
- 6 Week lockdown changed to level 1

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