

National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 02- Mortality rate by leading causes, 2015-16; Quality Statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
METEOR identifier:	664678
Registration status:	Indigenous , Superseded 07/02/2018

Data quality

Institutional environment:	The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) deaths data collections are conducted under the <i>Census and Statistics Act 1905</i> . For information on the institutional environment of the ABS, including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, see ABS Institutional Environment .
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Timeliness:

Causes of death and deaths data are published on an annual basis. Death records are provided electronically to the ABS by individual Registrars on a monthly basis for compilation into aggregate statistics on a quarterly and annual basis. One dimension of timeliness in death registrations data is the interval between the occurrence and registration of a death. As a result, a small number of deaths occurring in one year are not registered until the following year or later.

Traditionally, the Causes of Death, Australia dataset is released annually, approximately 15 months after the end of the reference period. The 2015 causes of death dataset has been released approximately six months earlier than usual, allowing more timely access to Australian mortality data. For more information on process changes see [A more timely annual collection: changes to ABS processes \(Technical Note\)](#) in *Causes of Death Australia, 2015* (ABS 2016a).

There is a focus on fitness for purpose when causes of death statistics are released. To meet user requirements for accurate causes of death data it is necessary to obtain information from other administrative sources before all information for the reference period is available. This specifically applies to coroner certified deaths, where extra information relating to the death is provided through police, toxicology, autopsy and coronial finding reports. A balance therefore needs to be maintained between accuracy (completeness) of data and timeliness. The ABS provides the data in a timely manner, ensuring that all coding possible can be undertaken with accuracy prior to publication.

As coroner certified deaths can have ill-defined causes of death until a case is closed within the coronial system, a revisions process was introduced to enhance the cause of death output for open coroner cases. This process enables the use of additional information relating to coroner certified deaths either 12 or 24 months after initial processing. See Explanatory Notes 52-55 and the [Causes of Death Revisions, 2012 and 2013 \(Technical Note\)](#) in *Causes of Death, Australia, 2014* (ABS 2016b), for further information on the revision process.

Causes of Death, Australia, 2015 (ABS 2016a) does not include revised data for the 2013 or 2014 reference periods. The ABS remains committed to the revision of coroner-referred deaths and will release revised data for these reference periods in early 2017.

Preliminary Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data is compiled and published quarterly and is generally made available five to six months after the end of each reference quarter. Every year, the 30 June ERP is further disaggregated by sex and single year of age, and is made available 5-6 months after the end of the reference quarter. Commencing with data for the September quarter 2006, revised estimates are released annually and made available 21 months after the end of the reference period for the previous financial year, once more accurate births, deaths and net overseas migration data becomes available. In the case of births and deaths, the revised data is compiled on a date of occurrence basis. In the case of net overseas migration, final data is based on actual traveller behaviour. Final estimates are made available every 5 years after a census and revisions are made to the previous inter-censal period.

Generally ERP data is not changed once it has been finalised unless there are compelling reasons to do so, as in June 2013 when data from September 1991 to June 2006 was revised (for more information on this recasting process, see Feature article 2: [Recasting 20 years of ERP](#) in the December quarter 2012 issue of Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS 2013).

For further information on the ABS ERP, see the relevant [Data Quality Statement](#).

Accessibility:

Causes of death data are available in a variety of formats on the ABS website under the 3303.0 product family. Deaths data are available in a variety of formats on the ABS website under the 3302.0 product family. ERP and Estimated Indigenous Population data is available in a variety of formats on the ABS website under the 3101.0 and 3238.0 product families. Further information on deaths and mortality may be available on request. The ABS observes strict confidentiality protocols as required by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. This may restrict access to data at a very detailed level.

Interpretability:

In 2014, the ABS implemented Iris, a new automated coding software product for assisting in the processing of cause of death data. This software has been used to code the 2013, 2014 and 2015 cause of death data provided in this supply. With the introduction of new coding software, the ABS also implemented the most up to date versions of the ICD-10 when coding 2013, 2014 and 2015 data (using the 2013 and 2015 versions, respectively), and improved a number of coding practices to realign with international best practice. See [ABS Implementation of the Iris Software: Understanding Coding and Process Improvements](#) (Technical Note 1), in *Causes of Death, Australia, 2013* (ABS 2015) for further details.

Data for this indicator have been age-standardised, using the direct method, to 75 years and over, to account for differences between the age structures of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Direct age-standardisation to the 2001 total Australian population was used (see Data Cube: Standard Population for Use in Age-Standardisation Table in *Australian Demographic Statistics, Dec 2013* (ABS 2014b)). Age-standardised results provide a measure of relative difference only between populations.

Information on how to interpret and use the data appropriately is available from [Explanatory Notes](#) in *Causes of Death, Australia* (ABS 2016a)

Relevance:

The ABS Causes of Death collection includes all deaths that occurred and were registered in Australia, including deaths of persons whose usual residence is overseas. Deaths of Australian residents that occurred outside Australia may be registered by individual Registrars, but are not included in ABS deaths or causes of death statistics.

Data in the Causes of Death collection include demographic items, as well as causes of death information, which is coded according to the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (ICD). ICD is the international standard classification for epidemiological purposes and is designed to promote international comparability in the collection, processing, classification, and presentation of causes of death statistics. The classification is used to classify diseases and causes of disease or injury as recorded on many types of medical records as well as death records. The ICD has been revised periodically to incorporate changes in the medical field. The 10th revision of ICD (ICD-10) has been used by the ABS to code cause of death since 1997.

For further information on the ABS Causes of Death collection, see the relevant [Data Quality Statement](#).

Accuracy:

Information on deaths and causes of death is obtained from a complete enumeration of deaths registered during a specified period and is not subject to sampling error. However, deaths and causes of death data sources are subject to non-sampling error which can arise from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data.

It is likely that some deaths of Indigenous people are not accurately identified as Indigenous deaths. Information about the deceased is supplied by a relative or other person acquainted with the deceased, or by an official of the institution where the death occurred and may differ from the self-identified Indigenous origin of the deceased.

The ABS Death Registrations collection identifies a death as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander where the deceased is recorded as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both on the Death Registration Form (DRF). The Indigenous status is also derived from the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) for South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. For 2015 data, the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages also used MCCD information for the first time to derive Indigenous status. This resulted in a noticeable decrease in the number of deaths for which the Indigenous status was 'not stated' and an increase in the number of deaths identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in Queensland.

In November 2010, the Queensland Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages advised the ABS of an outstanding deaths registration initiative undertaken by the Registry. This initiative resulted in the November 2010 registration of 374 previously unregistered deaths which occurred between 1992 and 2006 (including a few for which a date of death was unknown). Of these, around three-quarters (284) were deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

The ABS discussed different methods of adjustment of Queensland death registrations data for 2010 with key stakeholders. Following the discussion, a decision was made by the ABS and key stakeholders to use an adjustment method that added together deaths registered in 2010 for usual residents of Queensland which occurred in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. This method minimises the impact on mortality indicators used in various government reports. However, care should still be taken when interpreting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander death data for Queensland for 2010. Note that there are differences between data output in the *Causes of Death, Australia, 2010* publication (ABS 2012) and 2010 data reported for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), as this adjustment was not applied in the publication. For further details see Technical Note: Registration of outstanding deaths, Queensland 2010, from *Deaths, Australia, 2010* publication (ABS 2011) and Explanatory Note 103 in the *Causes of Death, Australia, 2010* publication (ABS 2012).

Investigation conducted by the Western Australian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages indicated that some deaths of non-Indigenous people were wrongly recorded as deaths of Indigenous people in Western Australian for 2007, 2008 and 2009. The ABS discussed this issue with a range of key stakeholders and users of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths statistics. Following this discussion, the ABS did not release Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths data for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 in the 2010 issue of *Deaths, Australia*, or in the 2011 COAG data supply. The Western Australian Registry corrected the data and resupplied the corrected data to the ABS. These corrected data were then released by the ABS in spreadsheets attached to *Deaths, Australia, 2010* (ABS 2011) publication on 24 May 2012, and are included in this round of COAG reporting. In addition to that, 3 deaths in Western Australian for 2009 which were wrongly coded as deaths of Indigenous people have been corrected as deaths of non-indigenous people in previous rounds of COAG reporting.

All coroner-certified deaths registered after 1 January 2006 are now subject to a revisions process. In this round of COAG reporting, 2010, 2011 and 2012 data are final, 2013 data is revised and 2014 and 2015 data is preliminary. Data for 2013, 2014 and 2015 is subject to further revisions. Prior to 2006 all ABS processing of causes of death data for a particular reference period was finalised approximately 13 months after the end of the reference period. Where insufficient information was available to code a cause of death (e.g. a coroner certified death was yet to be finalised by the Coroner), less specific ICD codes were assigned as required by the ICD coding rules. The revision process enables the use of additional information relating to coroner certified deaths, as it becomes available over time. This results in increased specificity of the assigned ICD-10 codes.

Revisions will only impact on coroner-certified deaths, as further information becomes available to the ABS about the causes of these deaths. [See Causes of Death Revisions 2012 and 2013 \(Technical Note\)](#) in *Causes of Death, Australia, 2014* (ABS 2016b). The ABS remains committed to revisions of coroner-referred deaths, including the revision of the 2013 and 2014 reference periods. Releases of revised data for these periods will occur in early 2017.

Causes of death statistics are released with a view to ensuring that they are fit for purpose when released. Supporting documentation for causes of death statistics are published and should be considered when interpreting the data to enable the user to make informed decisions on the relevance and accuracy of the data for the purpose the user is going to use those statistics. To meet user requirements for timely data it is often necessary to obtain information from the administrative source before all information for the reference period is available (e.g. finalisation of coronial proceedings). A balance needs to be maintained between accuracy (completeness) of data and timeliness, taking account of the different needs of users. See *Causes of Death Revisions, 2012 and 2013 (Technical Note)* in *Causes of Death, Australia, 2014* (ABS 2016b).

All ERP data sources are subject to non-sampling error. Non-sampling error can arise from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. In the case of Census and Post Enumeration Survey (PES) data every effort is made to minimise reporting error by the careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient data processing procedures. The ABS does not have control over any non-sampling error associated with births, deaths and migration data. For more information see the *Demography Working*

Paper 1998/2 - Quarterly birth and death estimates, 1998 (ABS 1999) and Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS 2016c).

Non-Indigenous estimates are available for census years only. In the intervening years, Indigenous population projections are based on assumptions about past and future levels of fertility, mortality and migration. In the absence of non-Indigenous population figures for these years, it is possible to derive denominators for calculating non-Indigenous rates by subtracting the projected Indigenous population from the total population. For the current round of COAG reporting, the non-Indigenous population denominator has been calculated by subtracting the 2011 Census-based Indigenous projections (see *Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001-2026* (ABS 2014a) from the 2011 *Census-based Estimated Resident Population* (ABS 2016d). Such figures have a degree of uncertainty and should be used with caution, particularly as the time from the base year of the projection series increases.

Non-Indigenous data from the Death Registration and Causes of Death collections does not include death registrations with a 'not stated' Indigenous status.

Some rates are unreliable due to small numbers of deaths over the reference period. Resultant rates could be misleading, for example, where the non-Indigenous mortality rate is higher than the indigenous mortality rate. Age-standardised death rates based on a very low death count have been deemed unpublishable. Some cells have also not been published to prevent back-calculation of these suppressed cells. Caution should be used when interpreting rates for this indicator.

Coherence: The methods used to construct the indicator are consistent and comparable with other collections and with international practice.

Data products

Implementation start date: 25/01/2017

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics

- Reference documents:** ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 1999. Demography Working Paper 1998/2 - Quarterly birth and death estimates, 1998. ABS Cat. no. 3114.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2011. Deaths, Australia, 2010. ABS Cat. no. 3302.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2012. Causes of Death, Australia, 2010. ABS Cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2013. Australian Demographic Statistics, Dec 2012. ABS Cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2014a. Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001-2026. ABS Cat. no. 3238.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2014b. Australian Demographic Statistics, Dec 2013. ABS Cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2015. Causes of Death, Australia, 2013. ABS Cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2016a. Causes of Death Australia, 2015. ABS Cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2016b. Causes of Death, Australia, 2014. ABS Cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2016c. Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun 2016. ABS Cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.
- ABS 2016d. Census-based Estimated Resident Population. ABS Cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.

Relational attributes

- Related metadata references:** Supersedes [National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 02—Mortality rate by leading causes, 2015, Quality Statement Indigenous](#), Superseded 07/02/2017
- Has been superseded by [National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 02-Mortality rate by leading causes, 2018; Quality Statement Indigenous](#), Superseded 07/02/2019
- Indicators linked to this Data Quality statement:** [National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 02—Mortality rate by leading causes, 2017 Indigenous](#), Superseded 06/06/2017