

National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2019; Quality Statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
METEOR identifier:	711069
Registration status:	Indigenous , Standard 07/02/2019

Data quality

Institutional environment: The Causes of Death collections are conducted under the Census and Statistics Act 1905. For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, see [ABS Institutional Environment](#).

Timeliness: Causes of death and perinatal deaths data are published on an annual basis. Death records, including perinatal deaths, 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.

Births 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 birth registrations data is the interval between the occurrence and registration of a birth. As a result, some births occurring in one year are not registered until the following year or even later. This can be caused by either a delay by the parent(s) in submitting a completed form to the registry, or a delay by the registry in processing the birth (for example, due to follow up activity due to missing information on the form, or resource limitations).

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 five to six months after the end of the reference quarter. Commencing with data for 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 the feature article titled [Recasting 20 years of ERP](#) in the December quarter 2012 issue of *Australian Demographic Statistics* (cat. no. 3101.0).

For further information on 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. Perinatal deaths are currently available in 3303.0. Births data are available in a variety of formats on the ABS website under the 3301.0 product family. ERP data is available in a variety of formats on the ABS website under the 3101.0 and 3201.0 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: Data for this indicator have been presented as crude rates, either per 1,000 all births, per 1,000 live births or per 100,000 estimated resident population.

Relevance: The ABS Causes of Death and Perinatal Deaths collections include 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 and Perinatal Deaths collections 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 cause 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.

The ABS Births collection includes all births that are live born and have not been previously registered, births to temporary visitors to Australia, births occurring within Australian Territorial waters, births occurring in Australian Antarctic Territories and other external territories, births occurring in transit (i.e. on ships or planes) if registered in the state or territory of "next port of call", births to Australian nationals employed overseas at Australian legations and consular offices and births that occurred in earlier years that have not been previously registered (late registrations). Births data exclude fetal deaths, adoptions, sex changes, legitimations and corrections, and births to foreign diplomatic staff. Up until 1 July 2016, births and deaths of Norfolk Island residents were counted in 'External Territories' and therefore not included in Australian birth counts. However, from 2016 births of Norfolk Island residents are counted in 'Other Territories' and therefore will be included in Australian birth statistics.

For further information on the ABS Causes of Death, Perinatal Deaths and Births collections, see the relevant Data Quality Statements.

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

In June 2014, the New South Wales Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages (NSW Registry) transitioned to a new data processing system which resulted in temporary processing delays. These delays caused a number of birth records received by the NSW Registry in 2014 to be processed in 2015. As a result, the total number of births registered in New South Wales in 2014 (91,074) was 9,388 (9.3%) less than the number registered in 2013 (100,462).

For a more complete understanding of the births occurring in NSW for 2014 users should consult Table 13 in *Births Australia 2014* (3301.0) which provides more up to date information about births in 2014 and 2015.

Analysis by the ABS showed that the distribution of important characteristics such as sex of child, age of mother, usual residence of mother and Indigenous status in 2014 data is similar to that in 2011-2013 data.

In 2016 the NSW Registry changed the 'proof of identity' requirements for parents registering a new birth. This led to delays in registration of births for 2016 and 2017. The ABS has been working with the NSW Registry to improve the birth registration lag. The recent launch of online birth registration in 2018 by the NSW Registry appears to be improving birth registration timeframes for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.

Previously, concerns had also been raised with the accuracy of the NSW births counts prior to 2011. In response to these concerns the ABS, in conjunction with the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, has undertaken an investigation which has led to the identification of an ABS systems processing error. The ABS

acknowledges that this has resulted in previous undercounts of births in NSW. Data for NSW and Australia have been revised to include previously unprocessed NSW birth registrations for the period 2005 to 2011.

Although it is considered likely that most deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) Australians are registered, a proportion of these deaths are not registered as Indigenous. 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.

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. Some under 5 deaths were affected by this issue.

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. Please note that there are differences between data output in the Causes of Death, Australia, 2010 publication (cat. no. 3303.0) and 2010 data reported for COAG, as this adjustment was not applied in the publication. For further details see Technical Note: Registration of outstanding deaths, Queensland 2010, from the Deaths, Australia, 2010 publication (cat. no. 3302.0) and Explanatory Note 103 in the Causes of Death, Australia, 2010 publication (cat. no. 3303.0).

Investigation conducted by the WA Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages indicated that some deaths of non-Indigenous people were wrongly recorded as deaths of Indigenous people in WA 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 WA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths data for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 in the 2010 issue of *Deaths, Australia* publication, or in the 2011 COAG data supply. The WA 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* (cat. no. 3302.0) publication on 24 May 2012, and are included in this round of COAG reporting.

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.

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.

All coroner certified deaths registered after 1 January 2006 are now subject to a

revisions process. In this round of Council of Australian Governments (COAG) reporting, and 2014 data is final, 2015 data is revised and 2016 and 2017 data is preliminary. Data for 2015, 2016 and 2017 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 [Technical Note: Causes of Death Revisions 2009](#) and [2010](#) and in [Causes of Death, Australia, 2011 \(cat.no. 3303.0\)](#).

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* (cat. no. 3114.0) and *Australian Demographic Statistics* (cat. no. 3101.0).

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. In the present tables, non-Indigenous population estimates have been derived by subtracting the 2011 Census-based Indigenous population estimates/projections from the 2011 Census-based total persons ERP. 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. Total population estimates for 2013, used in the calculation of non-Indigenous comparison rates, are preliminary estimates.

Non-Indigenous data from the Causes of Death collection and Perinatal collection do 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 for some causes. Age-specific death rates based on a very low death count have been deemed unpublishable. Some cells may also not be 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.

Australian Demographic Statistics. ABS Cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.

Australian Demographic Statistics, Dec 2012. ABS Cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.

Births, Australia. ABS Cat. no. 3301.0. Canberra: ABS.

Births, Australia, 2014. ABS Cat. no. 3301.0. Canberra: ABS.

Causes of Death, Australia. ABS Cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS.

Causes of Death, Australia, 2010. ABS Cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS.

Causes of Death, Australia, 2011. ABS Cat. no. 3303.0. Canberra: ABS.

Deaths, Australia. ABS Cat. no. 3302.0. Canberra: ABS.

Deaths, Australia, 2010. ABS Cat. no. 3302.0. Canberra: ABS.

Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories. ABS Cat. no. 3201.0. Canberra: ABS.

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Supersedes [National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2018: Quality Statement Indigenous](#), Superseded 07/02/2019

Has been superseded by [National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2020: Quality Statement Indigenous](#), Standard 06/02/2020

Indicators linked to this Data Quality statement:

[National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2019 Indigenous](#), Superseded 17/11/2019