

Chapter 3

Our communications

Getting the messages out better

The AIHW communicates its information and data to the public, and its stakeholders and clients, in a variety of ways. Website and other online communication to the public and the AIHW's stakeholders is becoming increasingly important.

The AIHW is committed to making its work widely accessible, and all publications are available free in full text on the AIHW website. Hard copies are also available.

Delivering publications in new ways

The AIHW releases all publications simultaneously in Portable Document Format (PDF) and Rich Text Format (RTF). The latter format suits people with vision impairments who use special screen-reader technology to interpret text on websites. All AIHW report summaries are also published in Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), which is accessible to screen readers. The AIHW also offers telephone help to vision-impaired people by describing and interpreting complex tables, charts and graphs.

As part of the AIHW's commitment to getting its messages out better, the following publications were produced during 2009–10:

- *Australia's health 2010—in brief* (released June 2010). This booklet highlights key points from the 578-page *Australia's health 2010* in 60 reader-friendly, illustrated pages. In addition, *Australia's health 2010—in brief* depicts the scope for illness prevention activities and other health advances. It is particularly suitable for use by consumer audiences and in secondary schools.
- *Australia's hospitals 2008–09 at a glance* (released June 2010). This short (28-page) publication presents key information from *Australian hospital statistics 2008–09*, written in a less technical style and published in a consumer-friendly format that combines key statistics with highly illustrative graphs and background information.

Feedback on the effectiveness of AIHW publications

The AIHW continued to evaluate the effectiveness of AIHW publications through short online reader surveys and telephone surveys of key clients. Feedback was on the whole very favourable, with over 90% of respondents considering the AIHW's publications to be 'quite clearly written' or 'very clearly written', 86% finding the AIHW's reports either 'quite useful' or 'very useful', and 70% saying they found the level of detail 'about right'. The main area for improvement, identified by around half of respondents in the telephone surveys, was 'the ability to locate publications not released recently'. Work to revamp and improve the website began during the year, with enhanced searchability one of many improvements (see 'Website and intranet redevelopment' on page 36).

Building writing capacity

'Getting the messages out better' is a key strategic direction for the AIHW for 2007–2010. Building writing capacity was again a major focus of activity for the year.

Following on from eight sessions held the previous year, another intensive in-house seminar session was held in 2009–10. This focused on the importance of concise, reader-friendly summaries in the AIHW's publications, using plain English wherever possible and avoiding statistical language traps. These sessions were backed by writing workshops for staff on 'Getting started', 'Supervising a writing project', 'Bringing a piece of writing to life' and 'Writing summaries'.

A third edition of the AIHW in-house style guide, *Writing for the AIHW*, was released in March 2010, for mandatory use by staff. Copies were distributed to all AIHW and collaborating unit staff.

Notification services for clients and stakeholders

During the year the AIHW enhanced its public email notification and news feed services, making them available through the 'Connect with AIHW' area of the website's home page. The 'AIHW in the news' service to clients links with a new live newsfeed section on the home page, showing where and how the AIHW is being mentioned in online news.

The AIHW offers various email notification services through its website. The number of subscriptions grew over the 2009–10 year to nearly 8,700, with a 20% increase in subscriptions to both the health and welfare publication release services, a 132% increase in subscriptions to education notices (mainly intended for teachers), and a 35% rise in subscriptions to employment notices (Table 8).

A self-subscription service was introduced for the long-established *AIHW access* magazine, providing readers with the option of receiving the newsletter by email instead of a hard copy version by post.

Table 8: Email notification service subscriptions, 30 June 2009 and 30 June 2010

	2009	2010	Percentage change
Health publication releases	3,339	4,019	+ 20.4
Welfare publication releases	2,498	2,999	+ 20.1
Education resources and promotions	276	640	+ 131.9
Employment vacancies	467	629	+ 34.7
<i>AIHW access</i> online releases	—	400	..
Total	6,580	8,687	+ 32.0



Review of Australian hospital statistics reports

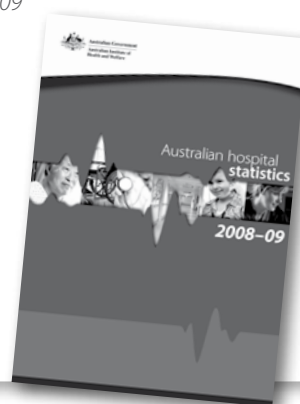
A report on Australian hospitals statistics is released annually and presents a detailed overview of Australia's public and private hospitals.

As part of the AIHW's ongoing publications review process, the AIHW sought feedback from stakeholders and users on whether the publication met their needs and whether there were areas they considered could be improved.

The result was a redeveloped report based around hospital products and services (such as emergency department services, same-day admitted patient care and overnight admitted patient care).

A user-friendly companion publication, *Australia's hospitals 2008–09 at a glance*, was produced, providing an overview of statistics on hospitals including funding, expenditure, facilities, beds, workforce and services provided.

Hospital statistics are very complex, requiring an in-depth understanding of data and statistics. In publishing a simplified and abridged version of the report, the AIHW aims to better meet the needs of the general public and non-government organisations for information about hospitals.



SNAPSHOT

New publications

Publication releases

During the year the AIHW released 119 publications, accompanied by 56 media releases, as well as many other forms of output, such as posters and slide presentations (Figure 1 on page xv).

The number of publications fluctuates from year to year depending on the nature of work produced under contract. The number produced this year was lower than the 152 publications in 2008–09. This was because several resource-intensive projects undertaken by the AIHW in 2009–10 did not result in AIHW publications. For example, the work on developing indicators and reporting indicator data for the COAG Reform Council was published by other agencies. Further, as reported last year, the total for 2008–09 was higher than expected as several publications originally scheduled for release in 2007–08 were held over to 2008–09.

All publications continue to be available free on the AIHW website <www.aihw.gov.au> and printed copies can be purchased by mail order, online via the website or over the counter at the AIHW's premises. A list of publications is included in **Appendix 7** on page 158.

Publication sales

The AIHW's flagship publications—*Australia's health 2008*, *Australia's health 2010* and *Australia's welfare 2009*—were the best selling publications for 2009–10 (Table 9). For those publications released during the financial year, the ranking may not be based on full-year figures. For example, *Australia's health 2010* was popular, yet was released only a week before the end of the 2009–10 year.

To enhance the sales of flagship publications, the AIHW developed pre-release marketing campaigns to target specific government and non-government organisations as well as the education sector, resulting in increases in overall sales.

Table 9: Top 10 publication sales, 2008–09 and 2009–10

	2008–09	2009–10
1	<i>Australia's health 2008</i>	<i>Australia's health 2008</i>
2	<i>Making progress: the health, development and wellbeing of Australia's children and young people</i> (* 24 September 2008)	<i>Australia's health 2010</i> (* 23 June 2010)
3	<i>Older Australia at a glance</i> , 4th edition	<i>Australia's welfare 2009</i> (* 17 November 2009)
4	<i>Health expenditure Australia 2006–07</i> (* 26 September 2008)	<i>Australian hospital statistics 2008–09</i> (* 17 June 2010)
5	<i>Australia's welfare 2007</i>	<i>A picture of Australia's children 2009</i>
6	<i>Measuring the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples</i> (* 30 January 2009)	<i>Health expenditure Australia 2007–08</i> (* 30 September 2009)
7	<i>Mental health services in Australia 2005–06</i> (* 6 August 2008)	<i>Australia's health 2010—in brief</i> (* 23 June 2010)
8	<i>Child protection Australia 2007–08</i> (* 21 January 2009)	<i>Older Australia at a glance</i> , 4th edition
9	<i>Disability in Australia: trends in prevalence, education, employment and community living</i> (* 28 August 2008)	<i>General practice in Australia, health priorities and policies 1998 to 2008</i> (* 8 July 2009)
10	<i>Asthma in Australia 2008</i> (* 20 October 2008)	<i>Australian hospital statistics 2007–08</i>

* Released during the financial year on the date shown.

The AIHW's website

The AIHW's major communication medium is its website. The site received over 1.3 million visits in 2009–10, a 12.1% increase on visits in 2008–09 (1.2 million) (Figure 8).

Visits to popular publications

Australia's health 2008 was the leading publication visited on the website during 2009–10 (Table 10). For those publications released during the financial year, the ranking may not be based on full-year figures, that is, the figures are from the release date of each publication until 30 June. Nonetheless, the publications listed, including both the AIHW's flagship biennial publications (*Australia's health* and *Australia's welfare*), were all highly sought from the website.

Figure 8: Visits to the AIHW website, 2001–02 to 2009–10

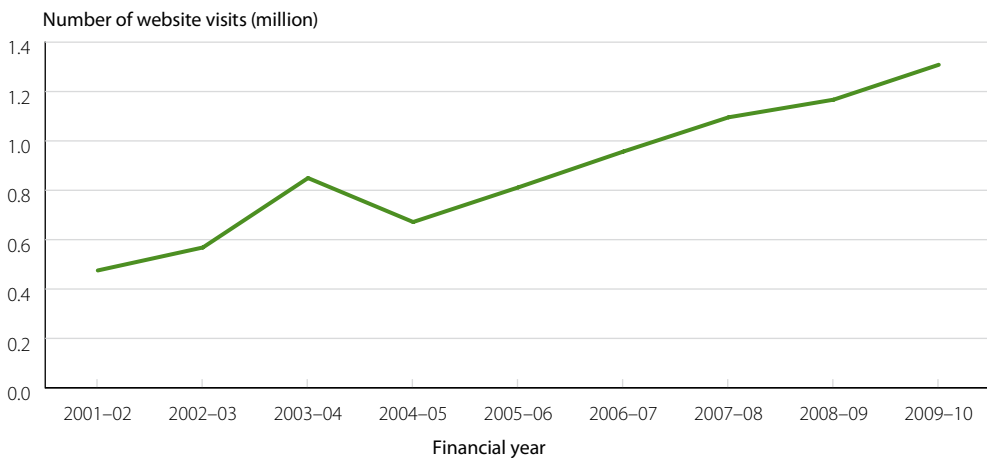


Table 10: Top 10 publications downloaded from the AIHW website, 2008–09 and 2009–10

2008–09		2009–10	
1	<i>Australia's health 2008</i>	1	<i>Australia's health 2008</i>
2	<i>National health data dictionary version 14</i> (* 21 July 2008)	2	<i>Young Australians: their health and wellbeing 2007</i>
3	<i>Australia's health 2006</i>	3	<i>Cancer in Australia: an overview, 2008</i>
4	<i>The burden of disease and injury in Australia 2003</i>	4	<i>Diabetes: Australian facts 2008</i>
5	<i>Diabetes: Australian facts 2008</i>	5	<i>A picture of Australia's children 2009</i>
6	<i>Australia's welfare 2007</i>	6	<i>Child protection Australia 2008–09</i> (* 21 January 2010)
7	<i>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework 2008 report: detailed analyses</i> (* 19 January 2009)	7	<i>Diabetes prevalence in Australia: an assessment of national data sources</i> (* 13 October 2009)
8	<i>Older Australia at a glance</i> , 4th edition	8	<i>Health and wellbeing of young Australians: indicator framework and key national indicators</i> (* 30 March 2010)
9	<i>Australia's health 2004</i>	9	<i>The burden of disease and injury in Australia 2003</i>
10	<i>Statistics on drug use in Australia 2006</i>	10	<i>Australia's welfare 2009</i> (* 17 November 2009)

* Released during the financial year on the date shown.

Website and intranet redevelopment

In 2009–10 the AIHW undertook significant redevelopment work on its website and intranet.

The website's structure and graphics were redesigned, and changes will be implemented in 2010–11. To support the website redevelopment a new content management system was purchased. When fully implemented in 2010–11, the new system will allow selected staff to manage their workflows collaboratively. The content management system will also reduce duplicate input and improve consistency and usability.

An expert in intranet architecture was engaged to seek users' comments and recommend changes to the structure and design of the AIHW intranet. These extensive changes are planned for 2010–11.

Closing the Gap Clearinghouse

A major communication innovation for the year was the development and establishment of the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse, a website project undertaken in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The Clearinghouse website attracted over 20,600 visits between its launch in early October 2009 and 30 June 2010. By the end of the year the Clearinghouse site contained over 4,800 items. Further details are in the 'snapshot' on page 103.

Education resources

The AIHW continued to develop the education resource area of the website by adding a

set of worksheets based on key points from *Australia's welfare 2009* and *Australia's health 2010*. Worksheets were also developed for specific subjects in response to requests from teachers.

Subscriber numbers to the automatic email notification education service rose by 132% over the year, largely due to new links established with the Home Economics Victoria Teaching Association, and resulting from the AIHW's ongoing relationship with the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, and word-of-mouth recommendations by teachers.

A targeted education marketing campaign was undertaken at the end of June 2010 to coincide with the release of *Australia's health 2010* and its companion booklet *Australia's health 2010—in brief*. Schools were offered free class sets (20 copies) of the 'In brief' booklet with any purchase of the more comprehensive *Australia's health 2010* report.

Media coverage

Overall media coverage

The AIHW issued 56 media releases in 2009–10, down from 68 releases in 2008–09 (Table 11). This decrease largely reflected the drop in the number of published reports for the year. However, the total number of media releases was the same as for 2007–08.

Although fewer media releases were issued, media coverage rose by over 18%, with 4,085 media references in 2009–10 compared with

Table 11: Media coverage, 2006–07 to 2009–10

	Press articles	Radio	TV	Online	AAP	Total	Media releases
2006–07	296	1,443	17	208	54	2,018	62
2007–08	847	2,043	52	471	100	3,513	56
2008–09	509	1,412	31	1,402	91	3,445	68
2009–10	581	1,958	139	1,347	60	4,085	56

3,445 in 2008–09. Radio references increased by nearly 39% and comprised nearly half of all references, while online references dropped slightly (about 4%) and represented one-third of all references. Press references increased by 14% while television references rose substantially from 31 to 139, an increase of nearly 350%.

Media coverage for individual reports

Reports receiving the most media coverage during the year are shown in Table 12.

The ‘Counting the homeless 2006’ series of reports was the most successful in terms of media coverage for 2009–10. These reports

were counted as a single release, although individual reports for each state and territory were published simultaneously. The provision of statistics for each state and territory may underlie the report’s popularity in the media as it enables news organisations to report more specifically on particular regions and localise findings on homelessness. This series, and *Australia’s health 2010* and *Australian hospital statistics 2008–09*, were all referenced more prominently on radio than online when compared with total references for all AIHW publications.

The AIHW’s two flagship publications, *Australia’s health 2010* and *Australia’s welfare 2009*, both received more coverage than did previous editions.

Table 12: Top 10 publications for media coverage, 2009–10

	2008–09	2009–10
1	<i>Australian hospital statistics 2007–08</i> (* 10 June 2009)	<i>Counting the homeless 2006</i> (a series of national and state- and territory-based reports) (* 9 July 2009)
2	<i>A picture of Australia’s children 2009</i> (* 17 June 2009)	<i>Australia’s health 2010</i> (* 23 June 2010)
3	<i>Health expenditure Australia 2006–07</i> (* 26 September 2008)	<i>Child protection Australia 2008–09</i> (* 21 January 2010)
4	<i>Cancer in Australia: an overview, 2008 and National Bowel Cancer Screening Program monitoring report 2008</i> (* 19 December 2008 for both)	<i>Australian hospital statistics 2008–09</i> (* 17 June 2010)
5	<i>General practice activity in Australia 2007–08 and General practice activity in Australia 1998–99 to 2007–08: 10 year data tables</i> (* 3 October 2008 for both)	<i>Australia’s welfare 2009</i> (* 17 November 2009)
6	<i>Making progress: the health, development and wellbeing of Australia’s children and young people</i> (* 24 September 2008)	<i>A snapshot of men’s health in regional and remote Australia</i> (* 14 April 2010)
7	<i>2007 National Drug Strategy Household Survey: detailed findings</i> (* 18 December 2008)	<i>Breast cancer in Australia: an overview, 2009</i> (* 26 October 2009)
8	<i>Child protection Australia 2007–08</i> (* 21 January 2009)	<i>Asthma in Australian children: findings from Growing Up in Australia, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children</i> (* 14 October 2009)
9	<i>Cancer survival and prevalence in Australia: cancers diagnosed from 1982 to 2004</i> (* 22 August 2008)	<i>General practice activity in Australia 2008–09 and General practice activity in Australia 1999–00 to 2008–09: 10 year data tables</i> (* 2 December 2009 for both)
10	<i>Incidence of Type 1 diabetes in Australia 2000–2006: first results</i> (* 2 July 2008)	<i>General practice in Australia, health priorities and policies 1998 to 2008</i> (* 8 July 2009)

* Released during the financial year on the date shown.



Australia's health 2010

The Australia's health 2010 conference was held on 23 June 2010, with over 450 delegates, volunteers and staff in attendance.

The combined knowledge of the health professionals, practitioners, policy makers and researchers presenting at and attending the conference ensured a comprehensive and informative event.

The focus of the conference was a broad review of the nation's health over the past 10 years. Particular emphasis was placed on the changes expected in the coming decade, particularly in health prevention and promotion, chronic disease and policy reform.

The report *Australia's health 2010* was launched at the conference by the Hon. Nicola Roxon, MP, Minister for Health and Ageing, who described it as a treasure trove of information.

'I know non-government organisations in the broader community also look to this trusted resource for information about Australia's health', she said.

'It gives us a very valuable analysis of where we are as a nation, what we're doing well, where we need to pick up our game, and the trends show us the risks on the horizons that of course any smart government will plan for.'



Facts from *Australia's health 2010*

In a single day...

- 806 babies were born—27 of these were conceived using assisted reproductive technology (2007)
- around 135 people aged 40–90 years had a heart attack (2006)
- 65 people were hospitalised for self-inflicted injury, and for 5 of these the injuries were life-threatening (2007–08)
- ambulance services attended almost 8,000 incidents (2008–09)
- over 529,000 prescriptions for medications were subsidised by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme or Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (2008)
- 124 people had a hip or knee replacement to relieve osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis (2007–08)
- nearly \$284 million was spent on health-related goods and services such as medications, hospital care and health research (2007–08)
- 378 people died, 109 of them from various types of cancer (2007).

Conference participation

Exhibiting at conferences

Each year, the AIHW attends a selection of conferences as an exhibitor. Professional conferences provide marketing opportunities for the AIHW to promote its publications, website and other services to a wider audience.

In 2009–10 staff organised promotional booths and related activities at the:

- 26th international conference of the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation
- 4th international conference on community health nursing research in collaboration with the Royal District Nursing Service of South Australia
- 39th annual conference of the Public Health Association Australia
- 6th National Housing Conference of the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute with the Victorian Department of Human Services, Housing Division
- annual scientific meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology
- 2nd Australian Institute of Family Studies research conference on Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
- 42nd national conference of the Australian Association of Gerontology
- inaugural conference of the National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee.

AIHW conferences

Successful conferences were held in 2009–10 by the AIHW to coincide with the release of its major 2-yearly flagship reports *Australia's welfare 2009* in November 2009 and *Australia's health 2010* in June 2010. The conferences provide the opportunity to showcase the AIHW's work to delegates from around Australia in the health and welfare sectors (see the 'snapshots' on pages 24 and 38).

The Australia's welfare 2009 conference theme was 'Whose needs? How well met?' The conference was attended by 350 participants and included papers on social inclusion as well as on how well the needs of Australians were being met by government welfare services and programs. The *Australia's welfare 2009* report was launched at the conference by the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon. Jenny Macklin.

The Australia's health 2010 conference, which had 450 delegates, provided opportunities for prominent international and Australian speakers to discuss current health issues, including health prevention, health reform and chronic disease. The Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon. Nicola Roxon, launched the report *Australia's health 2010* at the conference.

Registrations for the conferences increased by 30% and 23% respectively over the previous conferences.

Parliamentary relations

Hansard references

The AIHW is used as a reliable information source by members of parliament. The AIHW was cited 64 times during 2009–10 in the Hansards of both houses of the Commonwealth Parliament, a decrease from 2008–09 (72 citations) (Table 13).

Budget estimates hearings

The Director appeared before the Senate Community Affairs Committee Additional Budget Estimates hearing for the Health and Ageing portfolio in February 2010. The Acting Director appeared before the Budget Estimates hearing in June 2010. Responses were supplied to 14 questions on notice arising from these hearings.

Inquiries

The AIHW provided several submissions to parliamentary or government inquiries during the year, as follows:

Australian Government

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth	Inquiry into homelessness legislation
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth	Inquiry into the impact of violence on young Australians
Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy	National Drug Strategy Consultation—responding to Australia's National Drug Strategy Beyond 2009 consultation paper
Senate Community Affairs Committee	Healthcare Identifiers Bill 2010 and Healthcare Identifiers (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2010
Productivity Commission	Inquiry into a national disability long-term care and support scheme
Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration	Inquiry into the COAG's reforms relating to health and hospitals

State governments

Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian	Keeping country kids safe initiative
Victorian Parliament Family and Community Development Committee	Inquiry into the adequacy and future directions of public housing in Victoria

Table 13: Parliamentary Hansard citations, 2009–10

	Number of citations
Australian Government	64
New South Wales	16
Victoria	4
Queensland	16
South Australia	3
Western Australia	8
Tasmania	7
Australian Capital Territory	12
Northern Territory	4
Total	134