

Cancer in Australia 1991–1994

(with projections to 1999)

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is an independent health and welfare statistics and information agency in the Commonwealth Health and Family Services portfolio. The Institute's mission is to inform community discussion and decision making through national leadership in the development and provision of authoritative and timely information on the health and welfare of Australians.

The Australasian Association of Cancer Registries (AACR) is a collaborative body representing State and Territory cancer registries in Australia and New Zealand. Most are members of the International Association of Cancer Registries (IACR). The AACR was formed in November 1982, with the backing of the IACR, to provide a formal mechanism for promoting uniformity of collection, classification and collation of cancer data.

The purposes of the AACR are:

- to provide a continuing framework for the development of population-based cancer registration in Australia and New Zealand;
- to facilitate exchange of scientific and technical information between cancer registries and to promote standardisation in the collection and classification of cancer data;
- to facilitate cancer research both nationally and internationally; and
- to facilitate the dissemination of cancer information.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has joined with the AACR to produce national cancer statistics through the establishment of the National Cancer Statistics Clearing House.

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Preface

Cancer in Australia 1991–1994 (with Projections to 1999) is an invaluable publication arising from the National Cancer Statistics Clearing House. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is delighted to publish national incidence data from the eight Australian cancer registries and national mortality data.

Cancer registration is required in all States and Territories under the law to assist national efforts to understand the causes of cancer, and assist prevention efforts and treatment decisions. Data is strictly confidential to State and Territory registries (under State law) and within the AIHW under the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987*.

Timeliness of national incidence data continues to be a problem. Despite improvements in the past two years, national data is published three and a half years after the end of the last reference year. Publication of projections to 1999, informed by more recent data from some jurisdictions, is some offset, but still an unsatisfactory alternative.

The Institute is actively encouraging and working with States and Territories to reduce the time delay. It is notable that four jurisdictions supply incidence data to the AIHW within 18 months of the end of the reference year.

Given the special status given by State legislation to cancer registration, and the significant disease burden imposed by cancer in Australia, AIHW will continue its efforts to improve timeliness of national data.

Richard Madden
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Contributors

This report would not have been possible without the cooperation and effort of those who direct the operation, promotion and development of the State and Territory cancer registries and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare staff responsible for the operation of the National Cancer Statistics Clearing House (NCSCCH). These people, identified below, have all worked together, through the Australasian Association of Cancer Registries (AACR), to produce the national cancer incidence statistics in this publication. In particular we would like to acknowledge the assistance of Marylon Coates, Graham Giles and Dace Shugg who reviewed the first draft of the report.

Incidence information is received predominantly from hospitals, pathologists and departments of radiation oncology, with supplementary information provided by medical practitioners in private practice. The major contributors of cancer deaths information are the State and Territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The authors thank them all for their efforts.

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