

## Welfare-related information

The AIHW has continued to work closely with community services and housing agencies in all jurisdictions, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and non-government organisations in welfare data development, collation and dissemination.

This year saw the creation of the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) under new administrative arrangements. A good working relationship has been developed with FaCS and a Memorandum of Understanding is being developed to formalise this relationship. The Institute has set in place a practical set of business rules to take account of the new portfolio structure. These include:

- inviting the Secretary of FaCS to participate in Board meetings on the same basis as does the Secretary, Department of Health and Aged Care; and
- agreeing that the proportion of the Institute's appropriation devoted to the program areas of the two portfolios would not be significantly altered from its present level without consultation with both departments.

The Institute is a key agency supporting the implementation of the National Community Services Information Agreement. It has assisted in the drafting of the *National Community Services Information Development Plan*, has primary responsibility for the development of the *National Community Services Data Dictionary*, and is actively engaged in other projects under this Agreement. It has also continued to contribute to the development of performance indicators in the various community services sectors, and participates strongly in related data development activities.

The Institute is an active participant in the compilation of the *Report on Government Services*, which is published annually by the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision. It has assisted in the drafting of the relevant chapters and has increased the amount and coverage of nationally consistent data provided to the Steering Committee. For the 1999 report the Institute provided the Steering Committee with data on public housing, disability services, supported accommodation, and child protection services.

Internationally, the Institute has continued to contribute to the World Health Organization (WHO) Review of the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) and has also continued to provide welfare services data to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for its comparative work on social protection. The Institute has

accepted a request to provide adoptions data for the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoptions.

Preparation for the publication of *Australia's Welfare 1999: Services and Assistance*, the Institute's biennial community services report, commenced during the year. The report is required to be released by the end of 1999.

## **National Community Services Information Agreement**

The National Community Services Information Agreement between Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions with responsibility for community services, the ABS and the AIHW provides the structures and processes to support the development and coordination of community services information activities. The National Community Services Information Management Group (NCSIMG), comprising representatives from all signatories to the National Community Services Information Agreement, has overall responsibility for management of the Agreement. The Institute supports the Agreement by providing the secretariat function to the Management Group, which is chaired by Ms Gillian McFee, Director, Policy and Strategic Planning, New South Wales Department of Community Services. The Director of the Institute is the Deputy Chair of the group.

The Institute continued to support the National Community Services Data Committee during 1998–99.

A key achievement of the NCSIMG during the year was the finalisation of the National Community Services Information Development Plan, and its endorsement by the Standing Committee of Community Service and Income Security Administrators (SCCSISA). The Plan was prepared at the request of SCCSISA to analyse national information development activities in the community services sector, leading to an identification of priority needs for further development. The Institute assisted in the drafting of the Plan, participated in the consultative process with national non-government organisations during its preparation, and has published the endorsed Plan. The Plan reviews policy considerations, data requirements, data availability and development efforts, and identifies priority areas for information development.

SCCSISA has granted funding to the NCSIMG for three of the highest priority areas identified in the Plan: a project to develop principles and standards to improve Indigenous identification in community services data; a scoping study of family support services; and a minimum data set for juvenile justice and welfare. Institute staff will participate on the steering committees managing each of these three projects.

The Institute also plays active roles in each of the data development groups which report to the NCSIMG on child

protection and children's services, and supports the formation of a third group for aged care.

### **National Community Services Data Dictionary**

Following the publication of Version 1 of the *National Community Services Data Dictionary* in June 1998, the NCSIMG identified the ongoing development of the *Dictionary* as an essential task in the development of community services information infrastructure.

The AIHW has been assisted to produce Version 2 of the *Dictionary*, which is expected to expand on the existing sociodemographic and cross-program data items as well as introducing program-specific data items. Development of Version 2 is now well advanced, and it will be published in 1999–2000.

## **Housing assistance**

### **Development of national housing assistance information infrastructure**

Housing assistance information has no national supporting infrastructure similar to the National Health Information Agreement in health or the National Community Services Information Agreement in community services. During 1998–99 the AIHW worked with Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments to support initiatives to develop the necessary information management infrastructure.

The 1999–2003 Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement (CSHA) includes an agreement to develop and provide nationally consistent data. The Institute was given responsibility to manage the process, and is working with the Commonwealth, States and Territories to establish the components of this data agreement.

In 1998–99 the Institute was given responsibility to develop a national Indigenous housing data management strategy, including a minimum data set and associated data dictionary items. By the end of June 1999, the development of the data agreement had reached the stage of having broad support from most jurisdictions. This initiative will be further progressed during 1999–2000.

### **Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement data development, collection and analysis**

The AIHW contributed to the development, collection and analysis of data for performance measurement across all six programs in the Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement (CSHA): public housing, community housing, the Crisis Accommodation Program, the Aboriginal Rental Housing Program, home purchase assistance and private rental assistance. In addition to the provision of public housing data for the compilation of the 1999 *Report on Government Services*, the Institute also provided housing

assistance data to FaCS for all CSHA program areas for the 1997–98 Housing Assistance Act annual report.

A data standards project was completed during the year. The project examined and reported on data structures of current CSHA public housing unit record data sets. The report recommended changes for the standardisation of data across jurisdictions.

### **Indigenous housing data development, collection and analysis**

The AIHW undertook the first collection of performance data for Indigenous community-managed housing. A data manual and spreadsheet were developed, and a report on community managed Indigenous housing assistance for 1997–98 was presented to the National Indigenous Housing Data Management Group. Work has commenced on the development of a national minimum data set for Indigenous community housing.

### **Community housing**

During 1998–99 the AIHW completed the first national data collection on community housing as part of the Community Housing Mapping Project for the National Community Housing Forum. This involved the design of the collection instrument, the processing and output system, collection of data, and reporting.

## **Supported accommodation and crisis services**

The AIHW continued to develop, maintain and disseminate information related to the provision of services to people who are homeless and/or in crisis. As well as conducting and managing the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) national data collection and the Youth Homelessness Pilot Project data collection, statistical analyses were undertaken of supported accommodation and crisis services. An analysis was also undertaken of methods of adjusting for non-participation by agencies and non-consent by clients to the SAAP general client collection, with an information paper on this issue released in July 1999.

A scoping study of crisis services across Australia was conducted during the year, and a report published.

### **Supported Accommodation Assistance Program national data collection**

In its role as the national data collection agency, the AIHW continued to manage the SAAP national data collection, which provides information on the provision of supported accommodation and related services to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The 1997–98 annual reports (national and State), collated from four data collections (i.e. the main client collection, the casual client collection, the unmet demand collection

and the administrative data collection), were released in May 1999. Summary reports of each agency's SAAP activities in 1997-98 were distributed to all 1,220 SAAP-funded agencies in early October 1998.

The first comprehensive data collection on accompanying children covered by SAAP was processed and analysed in 1998-99. Individual agency reports will be released in early 1999-2000 and an overview report on children in SAAP will be released later in the year.

The demands on ad hoc statistical services continued to grow. The complexity of the SAAP data requests also increased.

The SAAP management and reporting tool (SMART) is a database application developed by the Institute to assist SAAP agencies in the collection and use of information. The tool was upgraded to incorporate changes to the 1997-98 national data collection. A further upgrade, to be completed in November 1999, will ensure that the software is year 2000 compliant.

The considerable contribution by the Institute was recognised in the report of the national evaluation of SAAP (SAAP III), released in April 1999 by independent evaluators contracted by FaCS. The report stated that: 'Without doubt the development of the national data collection, under SAAP III, through the establishment of the national data collection agency, has been an outstandingly successful innovation'. The report recognised the enormous achievement that had been made in establishing the collection, and highlighted the high regard in which all key stakeholders hold the Institute.

#### **Youth Homelessness Pilot Project data collection**

In association with its work in maintaining the SAAP data collection, the AIHW manages a data collection on the Youth Homelessness Pilot Project, a Commonwealth government initiative to evaluate a number of early intervention strategies for young homeless people. The Institute's involvement in the collection continued throughout 1998-99, beyond the presentation of the final report which was delivered to the Prime Ministerial Youth Homeless Taskforce in November 1998. Quarterly statistical reports were distributed to all 26 pilot agencies.

## **Child protection**

The AIHW receives supplementary funds from the States and Territories to collect core data on child abuse and neglect, on children on care and protection orders and on children in out-of-home care, and to analyse and publish these statistics annually.

The Institute plays a key role in the development and refinement of national data collections and performance indicators in child protection—a role it undertakes through its participation in the NCSIMG's National Child

Protection and Support Services Data Group (for which it provides the secretariat function).

A major step in progressing child protection data comparability was achieved with the completion of a project which explored the similarities and differences in child protection systems (and associated data) across the States and Territories. The project recommended strategies to improve comparability of these data. State and Territory officials and the NCSIMG will consider these recommendations for possible implementation.

The Institute is also responsible for national data on adoptions. The report *Adoptions Australia 1997–98* was released in February 1999. Reflecting changes to adoption regulations and practices, new data items and counting rules were developed in consultation with States and Territories during the year. The Institute was invited and agreed to be the Australian clearing house for adoptions data required under the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption, to which Australia is now a signatory.

## **Children's services**

A working paper, *Trends in Long Day Care Services for Children in Australia 1991–1995*, using published data from the various children's services program child care censuses, was released in December 1998. A conference paper, 'Children in Long Day Care Services 1995' was presented to the Australian Population Association Conference in October 1998.

In conjunction with FaCS, the AIHW has examined the comparability of the data from the Commonwealth children's services program census, the ABS child care survey and selected State data collections on child care. The project has resulted in a report detailing the quality, consistency and gaps in the existing data collections and recommending a minimum set of data items for children's services to cover child care, pre-schools and related services. This report has been a major resource for members of the NCSIMG Children's Services Data Working Group in its discussions and deliberations.

## **Disability services**

### **National minimum data set for disability services**

This national collection is a joint responsibility of the AIHW in cooperation with all jurisdictions under the auspices of the Disability Services Subcommittee. A report on the 1997 national data was released, and material prepared as feedback to data providers. Further collections were held in August–September 1998 and May 1999, the latter being brought forward to align the collection more closely to financial year reporting.

A major development during the year was the testing of a statistical linkage key in the data collection to enable the

measurement of multiple use of services. The linkage key pilot was judged a success and its use extended in the 1999 collection. Use of the key is subject to strict privacy controls, and has been approved by the Institute's Welfare Ethics Committee.

The Institute and the Disability Services Subcommittee have commenced a joint review of the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement national minimum data set in the context of changing services structures, information needs and technical capabilities.

### **National information management system for open employment services for people with a disability**

The national information management system for open employment services for people with a disability was developed and managed by the AIHW following an initiative of the disability sector supported by Commonwealth funds. The system had operated since 1995; it was planned to redevelop it to conform to year 2000 computing requirements and to extend it to cover supported employment services. However, this redevelopment did not proceed as it became clear that the ownership of the system and the responsibility for its redevelopment were uncertain. FaCS decided to decommission the system from 30 June 1999.

The Institute completed a report on 1997-98 data in June 1999, and quarterly data briefings have been issued throughout the year. Data for the final year 1998-99 will be analysed and published in 1999-2000.

The decommissioning of the system will mean a loss of longitudinal data. FaCS will continue to conduct censuses and performance assessment of disability employment services under its responsibility, and data from these sources will be available for the compilation of the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement national minimum data set.

### **Disability data development**

Work has progressed on developing standard terminologies, definitions and classifications in the disability field. This work has benefited from the Disability Data and Research Advisory Group, which was established by the AIHW. During 1998-99 a new two-year work program for the Group was developed by a newly constituted membership. National and international elements of the work program include the development of nationally consistent data definitions, and the revision of ICIDH.

Regular reports are now provided to NCSIMG and its data committee to ensure that the work contributes to the larger enterprise of community services data development, in particular the development of data items for inclusion in

Version 2 of the *National Community Services Data Dictionary*.

A series of tests of the draft ICIDH-2, released by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1997, has been finalised with the support of FaCS. These tests have focused on the quality of the draft classification and its applicability in Australia; specific tests in the areas of intellectual disability, conceptual applicability in Indigenous communities and the structure of qualifiers (ratings) for the classification have been conducted. Reports for WHO meetings were prepared in October 1998 and April 1999.

### **National picture of disability services**

This project develops and provides a national statistical picture of the demand for and supply of services in Australia to people with a disability, including both specialised services and relevant mainstream services and assistance. Major effort during the year focused on finalising two reports—one on the definition and prevalence of physical disability and another on the definition and prevalence of acquired brain injury (to be published in mid-1999).

### **AIHW–Disability Services Subcommittee joint work program**

During the year the Disability Services Subcommittee commissioned AIHW to undertake three projects, to be finalised during 1999–2000:

- a study of ageing and disability, and implications for support services;
- a project to better integrate indicators of demand, input, output, outcome and performance; and
- a joint review by the Institute and the Disability Services Subcommittee of the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement minimum data set and associated collection.

## **Aged care**

### **Residential aged care statistics**

The AIHW produced the third and fourth volumes of the Aged Care Statistics Series, with the publication of 1996–97 data on nursing homes and hostels. The next volume in the series, *Residential Aged Care Facilities in Australia 1998*, has been completed, and will be released early in 1999–2000. In addition, nursing home statistics from the period 1992–93 to 1994–95 (which had not previously been released by the Department of Health and Aged Care) were compiled, and released electronically on the Institute’s web site. These publications fill an important gap in the availability of aged care information to the public.

### **Home and Community Care**

In 1997 HACC Officials of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments commissioned the AIHW to develop the Home and Community Care (HACC) service standards instrument for use in monitoring the quality of HACC services. The instrument was accepted by HACC Officials for national implementation in 1998, and a report on the project, entitled *Developing Quality Measures for Home and Community Care*, was published in the Aged Care Series.

In 1998 HACC Officials asked the Institute to undertake a related project to further develop, test and refine strategies for collecting client feedback for input into the quality appraisal process. The Institute commenced this project in late 1998. The first phase, a review of relevant literature and professional practice, was completed in April 1999, and published as Welfare Division Working Paper No. 21. The second phase is now under way, with field testing scheduled to commence in July 1999.

### **The International Year of Older Persons**

The AIHW has been involved in a number of activities related to the International Year of Older Persons. This included the production of a second edition of the highly successful *Older Australia at a Glance*, a collection of fact sheets produced in collaboration with the Office of Older Australians in the Department of Health and Aged Care. The second edition is due for release early in 1999-2000. Other activities include the contribution of invited articles to special issues of the *Australasian Journal of Ageing* and *Family Matters*, and the presentation of papers to various national and international conferences run to celebrate the International Year. The Institute has also contributed to the National Strategy for an Older Australia through its presence at various forums and meetings.

### **Welfare services expenditure**

A bulletin containing welfare services expenditure data for 1996-97 was released in October 1998. This bulletin contains estimates of welfare services expenditure from 1991-92 to 1996-97 funded by government and non-government sectors. For the first time, it contains estimates of contributions made by clients through client fees. The compilation of data for 1997-98 was completed, and published in July 1999.

Australian data on government welfare expenditure are routinely provided to the OECD for inclusion in its social expenditure database. The OECD intends to extend the database to include public social benefits such as workers compensation and public sector superannuation, and mandatory private social benefits such as accident insurance and benefits from mandatory private superannuation schemes. Work has started on identifying

data on these additional items that may be available in Australia.

## Evaluation

Routine statistics continue to be published in a timely manner, with particular improvements in some areas. For the first time, nationally consistent data on housing assistance have become available. A feature of work on welfare-related data this year has been the considerable effort spent on developing better or new data.

As national data are developed and specified, there is a need to develop standard data collection protocols to ensure that the data are collected and managed appropriately. The AIHW will increase its emphasis in this area in order to provide leadership and assistance. As more quality data become available, there is also a need to strengthen the Institute's capacity to analyse and report on these data.

The welfare-related work program has been influenced both by the resources and the skills of Institute staff and also significantly by the requirements of stakeholders and external funds made available. In 1998–99, the Institute undertook work on several important data development and collection projects, e.g. child protection, child care services, the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program national data collection, the Youth Homelessness Pilot Project data collection, an instrument for client appraisal of the quality of Home and Community Care (HACC) services, and housing assistance. The work was funded by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

Negotiations have been completed with the Commonwealth for the Institute to undertake a program of data development work in the community care area during 1999–2000. This work includes the development of appropriate data items for the aged care assessment program and community care packages, and performance indicators in community care.

## Performance assessment against portfolio budget indicators and targets

### Priority outcomes

- 1 Improved information on health and community services available to the community and for decision making at all levels.
- 2 National approach to the development and production of national health and community services information.
- 3 A nationally cooperative approach to identification of community services information development needs and priorities.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Publication of the <i>National Community Services Information Development Plan</i> (Priority outcomes 1, 2 and 3)	December 1998	Approved Plan distributed November 1998; printed version available April 1999	
Publication of national data on disability (Priority outcome 1)	Quarterly	Published quarterly on time	
Publication of national data on aged care (Priority outcome 1)	July 1998	October 1998 December 1998	Published 1996–97 data on nursing homes and hostels, and back data for 1992–93 to 1994–95 on the AIHW web site
Publication of national data on supported accommodation (Priority outcome 1)	September 1998	May 1999	Delayed because of late receipt of data and priority work for the Productivity Commission
Stakeholder satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of outputs (Priority outcomes 1 and 2)	High levels of satisfaction	High level of satisfaction identified through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet feedback</li> <li>• meetings with key clients</li> <li>• renewal of contracts</li> <li>• increased funded work activity in welfare-related areas.</li> </ul>	