

National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2013 QS

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Quality Statement
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Data quality

Institutional environment: These collections are conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. 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.

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 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. ERP data is not changed once it has been finalised. Releasing preliminary, revised and final ERP involves a balance between timeliness and accuracy. For further information on ABS Estimated Resident Population, 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. Births data are available in a variety of formats on the ABS website under the 3301.0 product family. Perinatal deaths data are available on the ABS website under the 3304.0 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 1,000 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, and births occurring on Norfolk Island. 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.

Concerns have been raised with the accuracy of the NSW births counts in recent years. 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 the September quarter 2011 have been corrected to ensure that the preliminary rebased estimated resident population for NSW is correct. The ABS will also ensure data for the March and June quarters 2011 are corrected for the upcoming publication *Births, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3301.0). Further investigation will be undertaken into NSW births data for previous reference periods and action will be taken where required.

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. Forms are often not subject to the same best practice design principles as statistical questionnaires, and respondent and/or interviewer understanding is rarely tested. Over-precise analysis of Indigenous deaths and mortality should be avoided.

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 deaths data for Queensland for 2010. Please note that there are differences between data output in the *Causes of Death, Australia, 2010* publication (ABS 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 (ABS cat. no. 3302.0) and Explanatory Note 103 in the *Causes of Death, Australia, 2010* publication (ABS cat. no. 3303.0). An 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. ABS discussed this issue with a range of key stakeholders and users of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths statistics. Following this discussion, ABS did not release WA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths data for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 in the 2010 issue of the *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* (ABS, 2011) publication on 24 May 2012, and are now included in this round of COAG reporting.

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.

Previous COAG reporting and *Causes of Death, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3303.0) publications prior to the 2010 edition indicated that all coroner certified deaths registered after 1 January 2007 are now subject to a revisions process. In order to improve the quality of historical data, the 2006 reference year data has also been revised. Therefore, in this round of COAG reporting, 2006, 2007 and 2008 data is final, 2009 data is revised and 2010 data is preliminary. Data for 2009 and 2010 is subject to further revisions. This is a change from previous years (up to the 2005 reference year) where 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 2006 and Causes of Death Revisions 2008 and 2009 and in *Causes of Death, Australia, 2010* (ABS 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* (ABS cat. no. 3114.0) and *Australian Demographic Statistics* (ABS 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. 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 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. As such, 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.

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Supersedes [National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 09-Child under 5 mortality rate \(and excess deaths\), 2012 QS Indigenous](#), Superseded 13/06/2013

Has been superseded by [National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2014 QS Indigenous](#), Superseded 17/02/2016

Indicators linked to this Data Quality statement:

[National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2013 Indigenous](#), Superseded 13/12/2013