

National Community Services Information Agreement

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National Community Services Information Agreement

The National Community Services Information Agreement (NCSIA) is a multilateral agreement between government community services and statistical agencies to provide the framework for a cooperative approach to national community services information development. The Agreement operates under the auspices of the Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CSMAC).

For the purposes of the Agreement, the scope of community services is disability services, aged care, children and family services, homelessness services, juvenile justice, gambling, income support, emergency relief services and concessions.

Specific objectives of the NCSIA are to:

- provide a framework to facilitate, coordinate, plan, manage and prioritise national information developments, in order to:
 - link data and data development to policy and program development
 - identify data gaps
 - prioritise data development activities
 - develop agreed national uniform data definitions
 - agree national minimum data sets;
 - coordinate data developments in both government and non government agencies
 - reduce duplication of data development and collection by coordination with other human services sectors.
- provide a structure for developing data standards, uniform definitions and classifications, that will:
 - improve existing data
 - ensure data collections across the community services sector are consistent and comparable while retaining individual collections
 - develop a National Community Services Data Dictionary.
- improve access to consistent and timely information between all levels of government, service providers, consumers and funders, whilst ensuring privacy and confidentiality requirements are met
- improve consistency in data definitions, classification and collections between community services, health, housing assistance and income support
- improve coordination of activities under the Agreement with those of the Review on Government Services and the Council of Australian Governments.

Core activities covered by the Agreement include:

- development and maintenance of a National Community Services Data Dictionary (produced from METEOR) used by all data developers and collections
- development of community services data classifications and standards
- endorsement of national minimum data sets consistent with agreed dictionary definitions and classifications
- integrating and harmonising community services, health, housing assistance and income support data definitions, classifications and standards where possible
- data linkage across community service and other sectors
- dissemination of national information.