National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06—Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2015, Quality Statement

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type: Data Quality Statement

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Registration status: Indigenous, Superseded 07/02/2017

Data quality

Institutional environment: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) births and deaths data collections are conducted 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 are compiled and published quarterly and are generally made available five to six months after the end of each reference quarter. Every year, the 30 June ERP data are further disaggregated by sex and single year of age, and are made available five to six months after the end of the reference quarter. Commencing with data for the 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 are compiled on a date of occurrence basis. In the case of net overseas migration, final data are 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. Generally ERP data are not changed once they have been finalised unless there are compelling reasons to do so, as in June 2013 when data from September 1991 to June 2006 were revised (for more information on this recasting process, see the feature article titled *Recasting 20 years of ERP in the December quarter 2012* issue of Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS cat. no. 3101.0).

For further information on ABS ERP data, 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. Perinatal deaths are currently available in this same product family. Births data are available in a variety of formats on the ABS website under the 3301.0 product family. ERP data are 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 from the ABS 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.

Data for this indicator are published annually in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement information reports (which are available on the Productivity Commission website).

Interpretability:

Data for this indicator have been presented as follows: deaths per 1,000 total births for perinatal deaths; deaths per 1,000 live births for infant deaths; and deaths per 100,000 estimated resident population for child deaths.

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 of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 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 (that is, 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 New South Wales' births counts in recent years. In response to these concerns the ABS, in conjunction with the New South Wales 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 New South Wales. Data for New South Wales and Australia have been revised to include previously unprocessed New South Wales birth registrations for the period 2005 to 2011.

It is likely that some deaths of Indigenous people are not accurately identified as Indigenous deaths. 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 death data for Queensland for 2010. 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 the Council of Australian Governments (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).

Investigation conducted by the Western Australian Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages indicated that some deaths of non-Indigenous people were wrongly recorded as deaths of Indigenous people in Western Australia for 2007, 2008 and 2009. The ABS discussed this issue with a range of key stakeholders and users of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths statistics. Following this discussion, the ABS did not release Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths data for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 in the 2010 issue of *Deaths, Australia* publication, or in the 2011 COAG data supply. The Western Australian 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 cat. no. 3302.0) publication on 24 May 2012, and are 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 (for example, 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.

All coroner certified deaths registered after 1 January 2006 are subject to a revisions process. In this round of reporting, 2008, 2009 and 2010 data are final, 2011 data are revised and 2012 data are preliminary. Data for 2011 and 2012 are subject to further revisions. Prior to 2006, 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 (for example, 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. For further information, see Technical Note: *Causes of Death Revisions 2009 and 2010* and in *Causes of Death*, Australia, 2011 (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 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. In the present tables, non-Indigenous population estimates have been derived by subtracting the 2011 Census-based Indigenous population estimates/projections from the 2011 Census-based total persons ERP. 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. Total population estimates for 2012, used in the calculation of non-Indigenous comparison rates, are preliminary estimates.

Non-Indigenous data from the Causes of Death collection and Perinatal Deaths 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. Age-specific death rates based on a very low death count have been deemed unpublishable. Some cells may also not be 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 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2014 QS
Indigenous, Superseded 17/02/2016

Has been superseded by National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2015-16; Quality Statement
Indigenous, Superseded 07/02/2018

Indicators linked to this Data Quality statement:

National Indigenous Reform Agreement: PI 06-Under five mortality rate by leading cause, 2015
Indigenous, Superseded 18/11/2015