

NCIS News

Summer 2007, Edition 4



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The NCIS is managed by the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine on behalf of the State/Federal funding agencies. The NCIS is funded by each State/Territory Justice Department around Australia, and the Australian Departments of Health & Ageing and Employment & Workplace Relations, the ACCC, the ATSB and the AIC.

General Information

New staff member Anne McKenzie

The NCIS recently appointed a new staff member, Anne McKenzie, to the Coronial Liaison Officer position. Anne comes to the NCIS from GV Health in Shepparton, where she worked as a data manager. Anne has a qualification and background in medical record administration. Prior to GV Health, Anne worked for the University of Melbourne, School of Rural Health, and has worked in other positions as Health Information Manager, Project Manager, Data Manager and Data Analyst.

Outside work, Anne enjoys travelling and recently returned from a trip to India in October 2006. Her other interests include film-going, reading and spending quality time with her nieces and nephews in Melbourne.



Anne has already become a valued employee of the NCIS, and she is enjoying the challenges of learning a new role as the Coronial Liaison Officer. Anne's primary focus will be to work with the coronial offices and coroners to maximise their use of and data entry into the NCIS. This will include working on obtaining certain forensic reports (such as Queensland PM and toxicology reports) which we are yet to have available on the NCIS. Anne will also be working on the geocoding of address information, utilising the new software to develop statistical graphs, maps and charts of interest to coroners and their staff.

It is anticipated that the scope of Anne's role will increase as she becomes more familiar with the NCIS and its role in the coronial process.

ISO 9001 accreditation

As part of a wider VIFM accreditation initiative and effort to recognise the professionalism of the services provided across the Institute, the NCIS unit has been successfully accredited to the criteria prescribed by the ISO 9001 quality standard.

ISO 9001 provides the framework for establishing and implementing business processes and procedures within a continuous improvement model. NCIS accreditation to ISO 9001 confirms the high standards the NCIS unit strives for and maintains, and will ensure that all processes and procedures at NCIS will continue to follow best practice in the future.

ABS codes and death registration numbers added

The ABS has recently provided the NCIS unit with their codes for deaths reported during 2004. These codes include ICD-10 (International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health Related Problems, Tenth Revision), ASGC (Australian Standard Geographical Classification) for the location of the deceased's residence & ASCO (Australian Standard Classification of Occupation). Death Registration Numbers from the registries of Births,

Deaths and Marriages are also now available for cases reported from 2000 to the end of 2004.

Approximately 86.7% of cases from 2004 have ABS codes attached.

More information on these codes can be found at www.abs.gov.au.

Note: The death registration number for each case can be found in the Linking Numbers screen on the NCIS.

Fatal Road Crash Database project

The NCIS unit has entered into an agreement with the Australian Transport Safety Bureau to take over the management of its fatal road crash data base, including coding its data. The database contains information about transport accidents which resulted in death(s).

Under this agreement, the NCIS unit is engaging a senior coding specialist and assistant coder on part-time twelve month contracts. The new staff will be based at the VIFM and will be responsible for coding cases from 2004 onwards.

It is hoped that in the near future, interested parties will be able to apply to access this database to increase the amount of information available to them about fatal road incidents.

NCIS Strategic Planning Update

The NCIS Strategic Plan is nearing finalisation, and will soon be published and distributed to stakeholders and users.

The NCIS Team would like to thank all those who attended the 1 September stakeholder workshop in Sydney. The workshop was a resounding success – feedback from the participants was positive and a number of innovative and important initiatives were suggested for inclusion in the Strategic Plan.

Feedback on the draft Plan has been sought from several groups, including State and Chief coroners, the NCIS Board of Management and most recently the NCIS Advisory Group (which consists of representatives of NCIS users). Initial reaction to the Plan has been positive, and it is anticipated the Plan will be finalised by the end of March 2007, following final approval by the NCIS Board.

Uses of NCIS Data

Some recent examples of NCIS data uses by researchers and policy makers are as follows:

→ In December 2006, data from the NCIS was used by the NSW Emergency Services Minister Tony Kelly to help gain support for a recommendation made to state and federal counterparts for a new cigarette safety standard.

Reduced Fire Risk (RFR) cigarettes will now be tested and made available in Australia, after NCIS data indicated 63 people died in fires started by cigarette ignitions between 2000 and 2005. This highlights the practical use of NCIS data in informing government policy and health & safety initiatives in the community.

→ The Australian Safety and Compensation Council recently released a report on the incidence of work related fatalities around Australia in 2003/04. NCIS was one of the key data sources used. The report found that almost 80 (or 24%) of the 332 work related deaths which occurred in 2003-04 would not have been identified in annual figures if NCIS data had not been available. This reflects the uniqueness of the NCIS and its important place in Australia's mortality data collection. The ASCC report can be viewed from <http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/AboutUs/Publications/StatReports/>.

Quality Assurance

The Quality Team continues to ensure that all closed NCIS cases are processed through the quality system as soon after completion as possible.

The team has commenced the review of all cases closed prior to the implementation of the current Quality System; this involves all cases closed prior to March 2004. It is expected that this review will take some time to complete, as there are 45 months to review encompassing 50,489 cases.

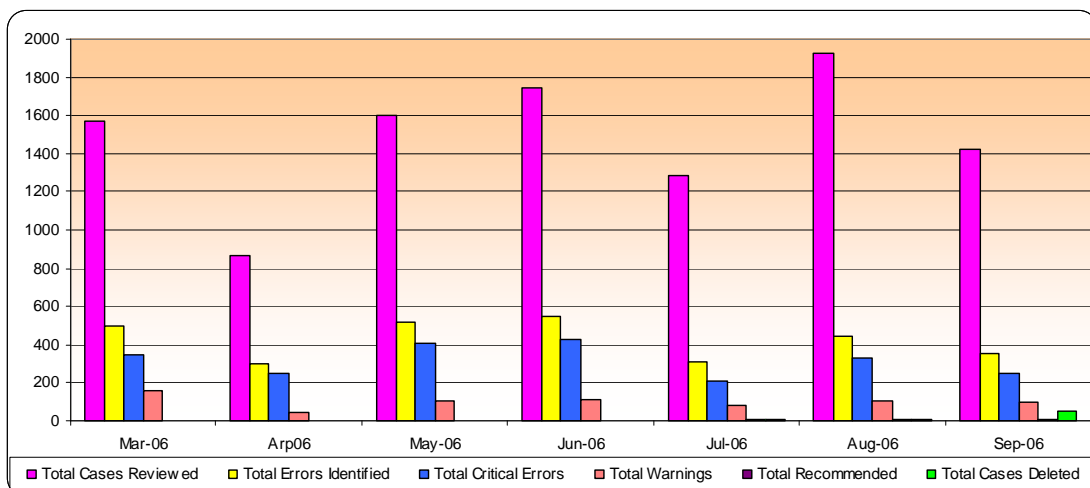
In recent months an increased focus has been placed on the closure of all 2005 coronial cases, where the case has been finalised by the coroner.

This focus has been supported by the ABS to maximise the completeness of their 2005 Mortality Dataset as quickly as possible. Several additional courts in NSW have begun processing their own cases in an attempt to alleviate some of the pressure from the Glebe court and ensure a timely case closure rate. Statistics below give an accurate reflection of the case review workload of the QA Team since May 2006.

Monthly Reports distributed to the jurisdictions (March 2006 – September 2006)

Total Cases Reviewed:	10,412
Total Critical Errors Identified:	5,601
% of Critical Error Cases:	53.79%

Quality Analysis for cases closed between Mar 2006 and Sep 2006



The amendment of errors is a vital step in the QA process and the NCIS Team appreciates the efforts of all those coders helping to ensure that the data held within NCIS is optimal. It should be noted that the NCIS QA process only identifies coding errors, and reports them to coronial offices which have responsibility for amending the coding accordingly.

Accordingly, the team has begun to review the reports sent to the jurisdictions previously to assess the level of coding amendments that have been made.

Codeset Upgrade

Many of the NCIS codesets are based on the International Classification of External Causes of Injuries (ICECI) as distributed by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Since the NCIS was implemented WHO has released an updated version of the ICECI codesets and a project has commenced to implement, where necessary, the new codesets.

It is anticipated that the full ICECI upgrade will be implemented by the end of the 2006-07 financial year.

Training sessions held in Melbourne are anticipated for the attendance all NCIS coders, in late June or early July 2007.

Anyone interested in the project should contact Leanne Daking (NCIS Quality Manager) on 03 9684 4458 or leanned@vifm.org

NCIS Coder Training

NCIS Coder Training is still a major priority of the Quality team and where necessary additional training sessions have been organised to ensure that all coronial staff responsible for NCIS coding receive the desired training and support.

Since Winter 2005/06, training sessions were held in Adelaide and Sydney, resulting in 12 coders being either introduced to the world of NCIS or given adequate refresher training to hone existing skills.

Document Attachment and Case Closure Update

A significant amount of work has recently been put in by the NSW and WA Coroner's offices to complete data entry and improve document attachment on cases reported to coroners in those States in 2005. This has resulted in a higher percentage of cases closed for 2005 in NSW and WA, and a significant increase in the number of police documents attached to NSW 2005 cases, reflected in the statistics below.

Note: more detailed statistics about se closure and document attachment rates for certain years and/or States/Territories can be accessed under then statistics section of the NCIS website.

Case closure rates

State/Territory	% Closed
ACT	87%
NSW	72%
NT	90%
QLD	72%
SA	94%
TAS	91%
VIC	88%
WA	71%
Grand Total	80.6%

Document attachment rates

STATE	AUTOPSY	FINDING	TOXICOLOGY	POLICE NARRATIVE
ACT	83.2%	95.8%	59.4%	72.1%
NSW	76.5%	53.8%	0.0%	57.1%
NT	96.1%	97.3%	56.1%	99.2%
QLD	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%	77.5%
SA	1.0%	47.9%	11.2%	99.9%
TAS	73.5%	81.0%	77.8%	97.2%
VIC	90.3%	99.9%	99.8%	91.3%
WA	2.7%	76.5%	66.5%	95.1%

With appointment of the new Coronial Liaison Officer Anne McKenzie, document attachment rates are expected to continue to improve. Anne will be focussing on obtaining Queensland autopsy and toxicology reports, SA autopsy reports and NSW toxicology reports onto the system, as well as investigating the possibility of obtaining a higher percentage of documents attached for regional cases.

Recent NCIS Activities

- ➔ Presentation of a poster at the Australian Injury Prevention Network (AIPN) Conference in Perth in September 2006, which discussed the utility of the NCIS as an early warning tool.
- ➔ Attendance at the Australian Mortality Data Interest Group (AMDIG) summer school workshop, held in Brisbane on 22 November 2006, and paper presented outlining the draft NCIS Strategic Plan.

Tips and tricks

Use of the STOP button on your web browser when searching NCIS

We have recently had several occasions when users have started to run a query through the query design or coroners search screen, and due to the time taken to return results/or wishing to change the nature of their search, have hit the STOP button on their browser and restarted the search again.

Despite appearances that the search has stopped on the web interface, the original search does continue running in the background environment. Therefore, running searches and

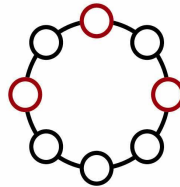
selecting the stop button multiple times actually slows down system performance, and affects others access to the database. Therefore please consider the following before running a NCIS search:

- 1) If running a broad search, it can take up to a few minutes for results to appear on the screen. This is becoming more of an issue as more and more cases are now available on the NCIS. You will sometimes need to wait for the results to appear on the screen.
- 2) Consider whether you can narrow the search down further.
- 3) Consider whether you can use the 'unload to file' option (on the query design screen).

If having trouble in obtaining results from search queries, please contact the NCIS team, and we will assist you in obtaining the data you require.

Any comments or suggestions?

We welcome your input! If you have any comments or suggestions for the content of NCIS News, please contact Stephen Morton on 03 9684 4442 or at stephenm@vifm.org. The next edition of NCIS News is scheduled for release in mid 2007.



NCIS