



NATIONAL CORONERS INFORMATION SYSTEM

BUSINESS PLAN

2004-2006

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Preface

‘Coronial data is a rich source of information about the causes of preventable deaths in this country...it will increase the potential for coronial information to contribute to a reduction in preventable death and injury...and reduce both the emotional and financial burden of lost life on our community...’

The Victorian Attorney-General, The Hon. Rob Hulls, NCIS Launch, August 2000.

The launch of the National Coroners Information System (NCIS) in August 2000 was the culmination of a large amount of hard work and dedication on the part of both federal and state governments, coroners, research organisations, universities and specialist investigators. They have brought to Australia the first national coronial information system in the world. Four years on, it is a pleasure to see how much progress has been made. The NCIS is now a major research and investigative tool assisting coroners, death investigators and researchers with death and injury prevention activities.

Today there is data relating to over 80,000 deaths stored on the NCIS. 47 coroners are registered to use the system nationally, and over 40 third party organisations such as non-profit and government departments have online access. During the past year there have been a number of significant applications of the NCIS contributing towards death and injury prevention. For example:

The NCIS has been used to rapidly detect and monitor all terrain vehicle (ATV) related deaths. This has assisted with government community education and training initiatives; and increased publicity about the dangers associated with such vehicles.

The NCIS has also been used to investigate incidents of infant strangulation associated with blind cords. A brochure has been produced by government to educate consumers about these dangers. Blind cord manufacturers have used NCIS data at their national conference to highlight the importance of blind cord manufacturing standards.

The fact that the NCIS is now in a position to be making these type of contributions to community safety can be attributed to the hard work and commitment of many individuals and agencies. I would like to thank the MUNCCI Project Team; the MUNCCI Board; and the National Committee for Coronial Information (NCCI); as well as the State and Chief Coroners and their staff for their contribution to the NCIS. A range of stakeholders have also been integral to the system. They include Monash University, the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing; the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission; the Department of Treasury; the Australian Institute of Criminology; the Australian Transport and Safety Bureau; the Australian Bureau of Statistics; the National Injury Surveillance Unit; and Justice Departments in each State and Territory.

The last few years have been challenging for the NCIS, however the recent confirmation of continued government funding for the system until June 2006, and the successful implementation of a user pays system in 2003 has demonstrated the commitment of all concerned towards the national coroners database. This support has allowed the NCIS to continue its vital role as a coronial death investigation tool.

While the previous two business plans involving the NCIS (1997 and 1998-99) have focused on development of the technical and procedural aspects of the system, this business plan focuses on consolidation of the existing infrastructures and data with an emphasis on further enhancing the use and value of the system for coroners, other death investigators and third party users.

The priority areas outlined in this document should allow the NCIS to further establish its place within the death and injury prevention community as a valuable case identification and investigation tool. The NCIS is committed to working with coroners and the community towards reducing and preventing death and injury.

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National Coroners Information System**

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Executive Summary

The National Coroners Information System (NCIS) has progressed from initial development work which commenced in 1997 by MUNCCI (Monash University National Centre for Coronial Information) to an operational world's first national coronial database, funded by a range of Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies, with data relating to over 80,000 deaths now available on the system.

Over the next 2 years, the system should further consolidate its position as a resource for death and injury prevention activities. Recent applications of NCIS data have demonstrated its enormous potential in this area.

Confirmed government funding until June 2006, with an associated change in governance structure will allow the NCIS to consolidate existing infrastructure and system data during 2004-2006.

The five priority areas for the NCIS over this time will be: data quality, data completeness; coronial awareness and usage; stakeholder relationships and communication; and administration.

Data quality is vital for the NCIS as the value of the system is reliant upon data being correct and accurate. Without data quality, users will lose confidence in the system and it will be unable to be relied upon as a valuable death investigation tool.

Data completeness is a priority area for the NCIS as case identification is dependant on coding being complete, and third party users are unable to access identifying information about a case until it is closed. Timeliness of case closure is vital, as it results in complete information being available to all users. Contextual information concerning the circumstances of an incident are unable to be accessed if documents are not attached to cases, while externally provided codes will allow for full completion of the NCIS data set.

Coronial awareness and usage is an important area, as one of the primary rationales for development of the NCIS was to create a resource to assist coroners in their work as death investigators. It is therefore essential that information stored on the NCIS continues to be made accessible to coroners in the most appropriate form possible.

Stakeholder relationships and communication activities are particularly important due to the variety of parties which use, are impacted by, or are stakeholders in, the system. Funding agencies need to be shown that their support of the NCIS has been justified; managers of coronial offices need a forum through which to discuss issues associated with NCIS data entry; and third party users need to be kept up to date about items that affect their use of the system.

Administration of the NCIS needs to be in a transparent and financially responsible manner and in accordance with the revised governance structure. Coding structures and

interfaces need to be maintained so the system remains useful for data extraction purposes; and the user pays system must be affordable while continuing to cover third party provision costs. It is also hoped the NCIS will continue to attract new third party users.

Vision Statement

To develop and maintain a high quality information service for coroners, which will also be of assistance to policy makers and researchers in the field of public health and safety, to benefit the Australian community by contributing to a reduction in preventable death and injury.

Background Information

The idea for a national coronial database was first discussed in Australia over 15 years ago, however it was not until 1994 that action was taken towards realization of that idea. In that year, the Australian Coroners' Society (ACS) endorsed the recommendation of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare that there be a national coronial database. In 1997, the Monash University National Centre for Coronial Information (MUNCCI) was formed. This was a consortium of three Monash University Departments being the Department of Forensic Medicine; the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine; and the Monash University Accident Research Centre.

With initial capital funding of \$165,000 each from Monash University and the Victorian Department of Justice, development of the system commenced in 1997. Since 1998, the Commonwealth Department of Health, other key Commonwealth agencies and each State/Territory Justice Department have provided significant annual funding contributions to assist with the ongoing development of the National Coroners Information System (NCIS).

Development of the system has seen new local case management systems developed and implemented in 6 of the 8 coronial jurisdictions, licence agreements signed with each of the participating jurisdictions, standardised classification systems developed, production of a data dictionary, design and maintenance of the NCIS web interface, and the development of protocols to allow access to the NCIS by third party users. The database was officially launched in August 2000, and all jurisdictions around Australia have come on-line and are now contributing data to the national coronial database.

Uncertainty surrounding the future of the NCIS has recently been resolved, with agreement reached concerning continued operational funding for the system by the Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies until June 2006. This funding commitment has come with a required restructure of the governance of the NCIS, with the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine to take on responsibility for management of the system. The revised governance structure is outlined in Annexure B.

Operations and Management Plan

During 2004-2006, the five (5) priority areas for the NCIS will be:

- **Data quality**
Improving the accuracy of information coded on the NCIS
- **Data completeness**
Increasing the timeliness, completeness and volume of cases on the system; and their associated full text documents. Incorporation of externally provided coding structures.
- **Coronial awareness and usage**
Improving coroners' knowledge, use and benefits from the system.
- **Stakeholder relationships/communication**
Ensuring all stakeholders, users, and interested parties are informed, aware, and where appropriate, involved, in decision making, developments and progress.
- **Administration**
Ensuring the NCIS operates within budget; is appropriately maintained and operates within approved legislative and governance frameworks.

DATA QUALITY

The importance of data quality for the NCIS cannot be underestimated. The value of the system is reliant upon data being correct and accurate. Without data quality, users will lose confidence in the system and it will be unable to be relied upon as a valuable death investigation tool.

Outcome

- To show a continual improvement in coding accuracy on the NCIS.

Activities

Year 1 (July 2004 to June 2005)

- Audit closed cases uploaded to the NCIS each month
- Provide refresher training sessions for all NCIS coders
- Hold quarterly teleconferences for coders to discuss various coding issues
- Produce regular coding tips newsletters
- Set agreed targets for coding accuracy
- Provide quality feedback reports to each coronial office each month outlining required data amendments.
- Redesign quality assurance flagging process
- Update coding manual

Year 2 (July 2005 to June 2006)

- Audit closed cases uploaded to the NCIS each month
- Hold quarterly teleconferences for coders to discuss various coding issues
- Produce regular coding tips newsletters
- Provide quality feedback reports to each coronial office each month outlining required data amendments.
- Provide refresher training sessions for coders as required
- Review “product related” field
- Update data dictionary
- Investigate the feasibility of an online coder training product
- Investigate data linkages for NCIS data comparison to other external sources
- Develop data quality feedback process for external users.

Measures

See Annexure A. Table 1.

DATA COMPLETENESS

Issues concerning timeliness of data entry and case closure, document attachment rates and the provision of externally provided codes on the system all impact upon the usefulness of the NCIS. Case identification via field searches is dependant on coding being completed, and the majority of third party users are unable to access identifying information about a case until it is closed. Contextual information about the circumstances of an incident are unable to be accessed if documents are not attached to the system, while externally provided codes from ABS and NOHSC will allow for full completion of the NCIS data set. The collection of additional information concerning drug related fatalities must also be clarified.

Outcomes:

- Increase in the timeliness of NCIS case closure across jurisdictions and document attachment levels; with progress made towards agreed target levels.
- Externally provided codes available on the NCIS.
- Work conducted on Drugs Module (subject to approval).

Activities

Year 1 (July 2004 to June 2005)

- Obtain agreement from the jurisdictions on target levels for data entry timeliness
- Conduct quarterly scheduled full uploads from each jurisdiction.
- Liaise and assist jurisdictions to improve case closure rates.
- Liaise with jurisdictions to facilitate the attachment of core documents not currently available on the NCIS.
- Develop and monitor data upload reporting system to allow identification of any upload issues.
- Develop internal process for identification and manual attachment of documents not automatically uploaded to the system.
- Incorporate ABS codes into the NCIS.
- Receive guidance on the continuation of the Drugs Module Project from the Drugs Strategy Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

Year 2 (July 2005 to June 2006)

- Continue liaison and assistance for jurisdictions to improve case closure rates.
- Continue liaison with jurisdictions to facilitate the attachment of core documents not currently available on the NCIS.
- Progress discussions as to the benefits and feasibility of dedicated NCIS data coder/s (either full or part time) in the various jurisdictions.
- Conduct quarterly scheduled full uploads from each jurisdiction.
- Regularly monitor upload statistics to identify any data upload issues.
- Encourage and facilitate increased data entry and documentation for country cases.

- Develop an agreement with NOHSC to provide data coding for work related fatalities.
- Perform further work on the Drugs Module project should authorisation be provided by the Drugs Strategy Branch, Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

Measures

See Annexure A. Table 2.

CORONIAL AWARENESS AND USAGE

The development of a national coronial database was originally undertaken to create a resource for coroners to assist them with their work as death investigators. The NCIS aims to provide coroners with improved access to national coronial information about the frequency of certain types of death, the circumstances surrounding those deaths, and previous findings and recommendations. It is therefore essential that information stored on the NCIS continues to be made accessible to coroners in most appropriate form possible. It is recognised coroners may not always have time to access the NCIS directly, so other methods of information delivery for their use need to be investigated.

Outcomes:

- Improved awareness by coroners of the information contained within the NCIS.
- Increased use and/or delivery of NCIS information to coroners.

Activities

Year 1 (July 2004 to June 2005)

- Revise the design and content of Fatal Facts publication to be more targeted and user friendly for coroners.
- Produce and distribute editions of Fatal Facts on a regular basis.
- Contribute an article about the NCIS for publication in the Australian Coroners Society Journal "InQuest".
- Contribute information about the NCIS for the coroners' bench book.
- Commence "broadsheets of interest" for all coroners around Australia, highlighting interesting trends/patterns, issue monitoring.
- Circulate information concerning use of NCIS data to all State/Territory coroners.
- Provide training and communication sessions for coroners and coronial staff in at least 2 jurisdictions.
- Maintain records on the amount and type of uses of the system by coroners.

Year 2 (July 2005 to June 2006)

- Produce and distribute editions of Fatal Facts on a regular basis.
- Provide training and communication sessions for coroners and coronial staff at least 4 jurisdictions.
- Circulate information concerning use of NCIS data to all State/Territory coroners.
- Maintain records on the amount and type of uses of the system by coroners
- Publish regular "broadsheets of interest" for all coroners around Australia.
- Design and implement a quiz/competition to encourage coroners to use the NCIS.
- Investigate tools regarding automated information delivery for coroners.
- Contribute an article to the publication, "VIFM Review" about the NCIS.
- Attend and deliver presentation at the 2005 Australasian Coroners Conference concerning the NCIS.

Measures

See Annexure A. Table 3.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

There are many varied parties associated with and/or interested in the NCIS. These include coronial offices, third party users, funding agencies, and the injury prevention community. As such, it is vital these relationships continue to be developed, and good communication between all parties encouraged and maintained. Funding agencies need to be shown that their support of the NCIS has been justified; managers of coronial offices need a forum to communicate any issues associated with NCIS data entry; and third party users need to be aware of issues that affect their use of the system, whilst having the opportunity to provide feedback.

Outcomes:

- Improved frequency and quality of communications with coronial registrars; third party users and funding agencies.
- Increased usage of the NCIS by the injury prevention community.

Activities

Year 1 (July 2004 to June 2005)

- Conduct regular teleconferences with Coronial Managers.
- Develop agreements with each of the funding agencies as to what degree of NCIS access will be provided as a part of their funding contribution.
- Produce bi-annual editions of “NCIS News”, a newsletter concerning NCIS activities and information for third party users.
- Create the NCIS Advisory Group as a forum for NCIS users to provide feedback.
- Redesign and update NCIS web site to be a more effective communication mechanism.
- Strengthen links with the injury prevention community
 - Participate in Australian Mortality Data Interest Group activities.
 - Develop relationships with the Strategic Injury Prevention Partnership (SIPP) Group.

Year 2 (July 2005 to June 2006)

- Continuation of Year 1 activities.

Measures

See Annexure A. Table 4.

ADMINISTRATION

The NCIS needs to be managed in a transparent and financially responsible manner in accordance with the revised governance structure. The NCIS interface and coding structures need to be maintained so they remain useful for data extraction purposes. The user pays system must be reviewed periodically to ensure fees are reasonable and acceptable for the user base whilst covering third party service provision costs.

Outcomes:

- NCIS operated within budget and NCIS operational and financial reports provided in accordance with the governance structure.
- Coding systems and interfaces updated and more useful for data extraction purposes.
- User pays system continues to be accepted by third party users.
- Review of legislative environment concerning FOI and privacy undertaken.

Activities

Year 1 (July 2004 to June 2005)

- Complete legal transfer of the NCIS from Monash University to the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, and associated transfer of intellectual property.
- Creation of the NCIS Committee as per the revised NCIS governance system.
- Perform minor interface amendments to enhance data entry, extraction/searching capabilities of NCIS and/or Local Case Management Systems.
- Review the user pays system.
- Provide quarterly financial and operational reports to the NCIS Committee.
- Produce an endorsed NCIS Business Plan.
- Produce the 2003/04 Annual Report.

Year 2 (July 2005 to June 2006)

- Provide quarterly financial and operational reports to the NCIS Committee.
- Update the ICECI Classification system on the NCIS to the most recent version.
- Produce the 2004/05 Annual Report.
- Review the Privacy and FOI legislative environment surrounding the NCIS.
- Assist with the preparation of business cases concerning any major enhancements deemed to be of benefit to the future use and value of the system.

Measures

See Annexure A. Table 5.

Financial Information

Government funding for 2004/05 and 2005/06

Government funding for operational costs associated with the NCIS for 2004/05 and 2005/06 is presented below in Table 1. These amounts were outlined in the document "Evaluation of the funding requirements for the National Coronial Information System" produced by the Victorian Department of Justice in July 2003, and were agreed to by the relevant Commonwealth and State/Territory funding agencies, subject to the revised governance structure and management transfer of the NCIS taking place.

Table 1. Government funding to be provided to the NCIS for 2004/05 and 2004/06

Category of Cost	Budget 2004/05	Budget 2005/06
Employee Related Expenses		
Salaries & Other Payroll Costs	320,020	329,600
Payroll Tax	18,310	18,860
LSL Provision	8,000	8,240
Workcover Levy	3,490	3,590
Employer Superannuation Contribution	28,800	29,660
Total Salary and Employment Costs	378,620	389,950
General Expenses		
Travel, Entertainment & Personal Exp	15,330	15,670
Printing, Stationery & Other Office Supplies	10,220	10,440
Postage & Communication	5,110	5,220
Staff Training & Development	10,220	10,440
Contractors/consultants	15,000	15,000
VIFM Infrastructure	32,700	33,420
IT Costs	280,880	246,900
Total Operating Costs	369,460	337,090
Total	748,080	727,040

Additional funds for 2004/05 and 2005/06

User pays system

Income generated from the user pays system will be allocated to cover the direct costs associated with provision of access to third party users, which include costs associated with processing, preparing and maintaining third party user agreements, provision of help desk services to third party users, provision of initial orientation training sessions for users, any additional IT support required to produce data extracts, and time taken to produce de-identified statistical information upon request.

Funds from 2003/04

Due to a considerable period of uncertainty surrounding the future of the NCIS during 2003/04, certain activities were unable to be completed by the NCIS team.

As such, funds allocated for these activities have been incorporated into 2004/05 to allow for the completion of these tasks.

These activities include the provision of training for NCIS coders; the provision of training and education for coroners and coronial users; and the development of improved NCIS information delivery to coroners.

These funds will also be used to cover the legal and other associated costs which have been expended in relation to the required transfer of the NCIS from Monash University to the VIFM. These costs were not incorporated into the original operational costs endorsed by the funding agencies as outlined in Table 1..

Drugs module

As detailed in the 2002-2003 MUNCCI Annual Report, there is approximately \$130,000 of unexpended funds remaining in relation to the Drugs Module project. This project was funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, Drugs Strategy Branch and was to capture further information about drug related fatalities on the NCIS. Full implementation of this project within the original timelines however was hampered due to a number of factors. NCIS has been advised any further work on this project is contingent upon advice from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing. The NCIS is awaiting further instruction from the Drugs Strategy Branch in relation to this project before proceeding further.

ANNEXURE A – NCIS MEASURES

Table 1. Measures for Data Quality

Data Quality – Measures	Achieved (Yes/No/Partially)
<i>Year 1 (July 2004 – June 2005) * Note: Measures start from October 2004</i>	
2004 Refresher training provided to all jurisdictions	
2 Coder teleconferences held	
4 Coding Tips Newsletters produced	
8 Quality Feedback reports provided to each jurisdiction.	
Agreed target for coding accuracy set	
New Quality Flagging Process implemented	
Coding manual updated	
Improvement in coding accuracy levels detected, with progress made towards reaching agreed target	
<i>Year 2 (July 2005 – June 2006)</i>	
Refresher coder training provided to jurisdictions as required	
4 Coder teleconferences held	
6 Coding Tips newsletters produced	
Targeted Quality Audits on 2 specific topic areas conducted	
10 Quality Feedback reports provided to each jurisdiction	
Product related field reviewed and relevant amendments made to coding guidelines	
Data dictionary updated	
Feasibility of online coder training product investigated	
Investigated data linkages for comparison of NCIS data to other external sources	
Data quality feedback process for external users developed	
Further improvement in coding accuracy levels detected, with additional progress made towards reaching the agreed target	

Table 2. Measures for Data Completeness

Note: It should be recognized that the achievement of the some of the measures outlined in Table 2 are contingent upon the co-operation of the various coronial jurisdictions, and technical availability of certain documents in an electronic form.

Data Completeness – Measures	Achieved (Yes/No/Partially)
<i>Year 1 (July 2004 – June 2005) * Note: Measures start from October 2004</i>	
Target levels for timeliness of data entry agreed	
2 full uploads completed for every jurisdiction	
Investigations made into obtaining Queensland autopsy; toxicology and finding documents; NSW toxicology reports; Launceston autopsy reports; and WA post mortem cover sheets; SA toxicology and post mortem reports	
Improvement in case closure timeliness with progress made towards reaching agreed targets	
Manual attachment of case documents occurring when not automatically attached	
Upload reporting system developed and monitored	
ABS ICD-10 Cause of Death Codes; ASCO Occupational Codes; ASGC Location Codes for Residence available on the NCIS	
Received advice concerning the continuation of Drugs Module project provided by the Cth Dept of Health and Ageing	
<i>Year 2 (July 2005 – June 2006)</i>	
Investigations into feasibility of dedicated NCIS coder personnel undertaken	
4 full uploads completed for every jurisdiction	
Queensland autopsy; toxicology and finding documents available on the NCIS	
NSW toxicology reports available on the NCIS	
Launceston autopsy reports available on the NCIS	
WA post mortem cover sheets available on the NCIS	

SA Toxicology and Post Mortem reports available on the NCIS	
Upload statistics regularly monitored	
Improved case closure and document attachment levels for country cases	
Continued improvement in case closure timeliness, and document attachment levels detected, with further progress made towards reaching agreed targets	
NOHSC Industry and Occupation at Incident Codes available on the NCIS	
Conducted drugs module activity work subject to authorisation	

Table 3. Measures for Coronial Awareness and Usage

Coronial Awareness and Usage – Measures	Achieved (Yes/No/Partially)
<i>Year 1 (July 2004 – June 2005) * Note: Measures start from October 2004</i>	
Fatal Facts publication redesigned	
At least 2 editions of Fatal Facts published	
Article about the NCIS published in “InQuest”	
Information about the NCIS contained in the Coroners Bench Book	
Broadsheets concerning areas of interest sent to coroners	
Correspondence highlighting use of NCIS data sent to coroners	
Records on coronial usage of the NCIS retained	
Training and awareness sessions provided to at least 2 coronial jurisdictions	
<i>Year 2 (July 2005 – June 2006)</i>	
6 editions of Fatal Facts published (4 regular editions; 2 specialist editions)	
Training and awareness sessions provided to at least 4 coronial jurisdictions	
Correspondence highlighting use of NCIS data sent to coroners	
Production and distribution of at least 6 Broadsheets of interest	
Records on coronial usage of the NCIS retained	
NCIS Quiz/competitions developed to encourage NCIS use by coroners	
Trend analysis tool developed to assist in information delivery to coroners	
2005 Australasian Coroners Conference attended and presentation delivered.	
Article concerning the NCIS published in the “VIFM Review” journal	

Table 4. Measures for stakeholder relationships and communication

Stakeholder relationships and communication – Measures	Achieved (Yes/No/Partially)
<i>Year 1 (July 2004 – June 2005) * Note: Measures start from October 2004</i>	
At least 2 teleconferences held with Coronial Managers	
Agreements made with each of the NCIS funding agencies concerning NCIS access	
NCIS Advisory Group created and at least 2 meetings held	
One edition of NCIS News published	
NCIS web site redesigned	
Participation in at least 80% of Australasian Mortality Data Group meetings	
Contact/discussions held with SIPP representatives	
<i>Year 2 (July 2005 – June 2006)</i>	
At least 4 teleconferences held with Coronial Managers	
2 meetings held with the NCIS Advisory Group	
2 editions of NCIS News published	
Participation in at least 80% of Australasian Mortality Data Group meetings	
SIPP representatives and/or their departments utilising information from the NCIS	

Table 5. Measures for administration

Administration – Measures	Achieved (Yes/No/Partially)
<i>Year 1 (July 2004 – June 2005) * Note: Measures start from October 2004</i>	
Legal transfer of the NCIS completed	
NCIS Committee created and at least 2 meetings held	
Minor interface amendments made as required	
User pays system reviewed	
At least 2 financial and operational reports provided to the NCIS Committee	
NCIS Business Plan completed and endorsed	

NCIS 2003/04 Annual report produced	
NCIS managed within budget	
<i>Year 2 (July 2005 – June 2006)</i>	
4 financial and operational reports provided to the NCIS Committee	
ICECI Classification scheme updated on the NCIS	
NCIS managed within budget	
Privacy and FOI legislative environment reviewed	
2004/2005 Annual report produced	
Any relevant business cases for major enhancements prepared	

ANNEXURE B

National Coroners Information System Governance Framework

Governance Arrangements

The new governance arrangement for NCIS will be managed by the bodies as detailed in Figure 1. The bodies referred to in Figure 1 will perform the roles and responsibilities detailed in this document.

Definitions

Commonwealth Users Group means the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing; the Commonwealth Department of Treasury; the Australian Institute of Criminology; the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission.

NCIS means the National Coroners Information System.

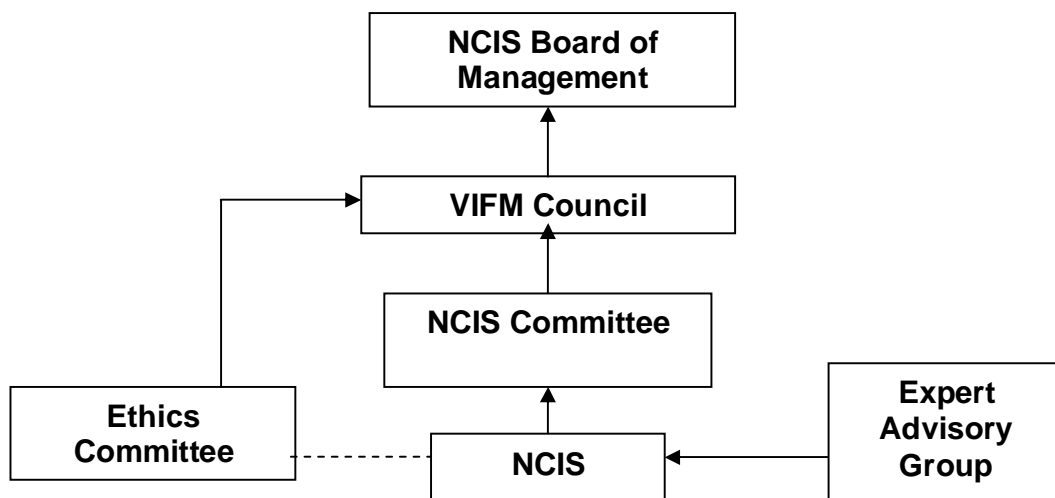
National Justice CEO's means the Chief Executive Officers of the Attorney General or Justice Departments in each State and Territory, as appropriate.

Participating Jurisdictions means Victoria; Australian Capital Territory; South Australia; Queensland; New South Wales; Western Australia; Northern Territory; Tasmania.

SCAG means the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General

VIFM means the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine

Figure 1 – Revised Governance Arrangements for the NCIS



The VIFM Council will create the NCIS Committee to assist in the management of the NCIS and to provide high level support to the NCIS Manager. The NCIS Committee will be subject to oversight by the VIFM Council. The VIFM Council will report to the NCIS Board of Management.

NCIS Board of Management

The NCIS Board of Management ('NCIS Board') will oversee the operations of the NCIS, ensure the effective and efficient management of funds, monitor the strategic direction of the NCIS, and assess the policies and performance of the NCIS.

It is expected that the NCIS Board will meet face to face twice a year, and meet as required by teleconference during the course of the year.

The NCIS Board comprise representatives of the Commonwealth and each State and Territory in the following manner:

- 1 representative from the Participating Jurisdictions as nominated by each of the National Justice CEO's.
- 1 representative from the Commonwealth Users Group.

The NCIS Board will undertake the following functions:

- (a) Determine by agreement with the VIFM, the work program and priorities of the NCIS on an annual basis.
- (b) Monitor the progress and output of the NCIS and the allocation of resources in achieving the objectives of the work program.
- (c) Approve the policies and strategic direction of the NCIS.
- (d) Report annually to SCAG on the operation of the NCIS and to furnish to SCAG such reports as may be required relating to the operations and achievements of the NCIS.
- (e) Coordinate an independent review and evaluation of the NCIS on a triennial basis, to be completed at least 6 months prior to the end of each 3 year funding period. The terms of the review and the engagement of an independent reviewer will be determined by the NCIS Board.

The NCIS will be funded on a triennial basis, and at least 3 months prior to the end of each 3 year funding period (or at whatever time required by SCAG to fit in with funding

cycles) the NCIS Board will report to SCAG on the results of the independent review, and its recommendations on a further 3 year funding agreement.

NCIS Committee

The NCIS Committee will provide high level advice and support to the NCIS Manager concerning operational, strategic, financial, and human resource aspects of the NCIS. The NCIS Committee will be composed of representatives from:

- VIFM (2 representatives)
- Australasian Coroners Society (2 representatives)
- Injury Prevention community (1 representative)
- NCIS (the NCIS Manager)

The NCIS Committee will meet on a quarterly basis and provide quarterly reports to the VIFM Council.

VIFM Council

The VIFM Council will furnish to the NCIS Board the following reports:

- An annual report on the administration, functioning and achievements of the NCIS;
- A biannual report on expenditure against budget, progress of the business plan, any proposed changes to the strategic direction of the NCIS, or proposed enhancements to the NCIS;
- Any such other report or reports as the NCIS Board may request from time to time.

Expert Advisory Group

This group will be created to provide a forum for NCIS users and interested parties. Its role will be to provide feedback on technical and usage issues associated with the NCIS and make any recommendations as to the further development of the system. This group however will not be involved in the governance of the NCIS.

Ethics Committee

A formal ethics committee is an essential part of the management of the NCIS for the following reasons:

- All research projects that relate to humans must be considered by an ethics committee governed by NHMRC (National Health and Medical Research Committee) guidelines.
- The government will be protected by having controls in place that are in line with the NHMRC guidelines pertaining to third party access to sensitive government information about deceased individuals.
- State and Territory Coroners confidence in the independence and transparency of processes in determining access of third parties to coronial data will be maintained.
- Any appearance of a potential conflict of interest will be reduced, in that the body that obtains revenue from the authorisation of new users does not have sole decision making responsibility as to who can receive access.
- The likelihood of complaints from next of kin or other interested parties with regard to information about their loved ones will be reduced as access has been governed by standard nationally approved controls.

NCIS applications under the revised governance framework will be considered by either the VIFM Ethics committee, or the Victorian Department of Justice Ethics Committee.