

# General Search Tips

National Colonial Information System



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# 1 Introduction

The NCIS is a data storage and retrieval system containing coronial information from Australia and New Zealand. It enables coroners, their staff, public sector agencies, researchers and other agencies to access coronial data to inform death and injury prevention activities. The NCIS contains data about deaths reported to an Australian coroner from July 2000, and to a New Zealand coroner from July 2007.

NCIS data is accessible to death investigators assisting the coroner and researchers with an ethically approved research project. For more information about how to access the data, please visit [our website](#).

This guide is intended to assist those with access to the NCIS in constructing a search. It details the various types of search options available and how to refine searching to maximise results.

For specific questions or to arrange a search training session, please contact the NCIS ([ncis@ncis.org.au](mailto:ncis@ncis.org.au)).

## 2 Find Case Screen

The Find Case screen allows searches for cases where some of the details of a specific case are known, such as a name, date of birth or case information.

Some tips for searching on this screen:

- Searches can be made for a complete name e.g. John Smith or part of a name e.g. JO SMI.
- To search by name a Surname or part thereof must be entered. Searches by First Names only cannot be done without selecting a jurisdiction.

Select Case Status: Closed for your search. Identifying information is only available for closed cases.

If a NCIS reference number is available e.g. NSW.2000.000 then these numbers can be entered into the Find Case screen like this.

The reference number is comprised of the Jurisdiction, Case Year and Case Sequence.

Alternatively, the NCIS reference number can be entered into the Jump To field at the bottom of the screen.

### RESULTS

Once the search parameters have been entered, click Search at the bottom of the screen. A list of results will appear.

Jurisdiction	Year	Sequence	Case No	Local No	Case Status	Firstname	Surname	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Date Notified	Access Record
NSW	2000				CLOSED			09/08/2000	09/08/2000 00:00:00		<a href="#">Access Record</a>
NSW	2000				CLOSED			25/11/2000	27/11/2000 00:00:00		<a href="#">Access Record</a>
NSW	2001				CLOSED			12/06/2001	12/06/2001 00:00:00		<a href="#">Access Record</a>
NSW	2001				CLOSED			16/09/2001	16/09/2001 00:00:00		<a href="#">Access Record</a>

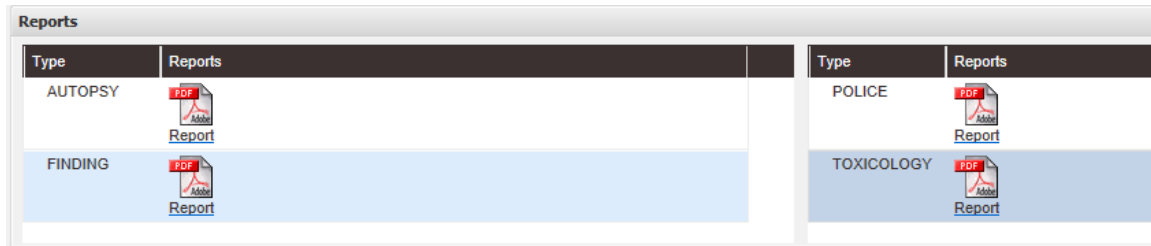
Click on Access Record to access specific details for that case.

### Case Detail Screen

This screen provides the demographic and identifying information about the deceased. The NCIS Reference number can be found in the top left corner of the screen, the Local Case Number in the top right.

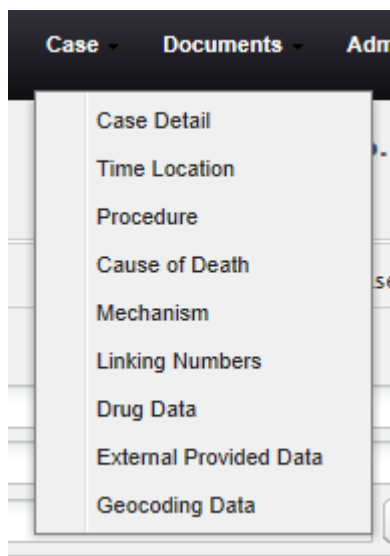


At the bottom of the Case Detail screen are the available Case Reports for the selected case.



Clicking on a Case Report will open a new tab or window showing the PDF report.

Other case information is available from the Case drop-down menu at the top of the screen. Hover over this menu and more options will be available to view further information about this individual case.



Options available include Time Location of the incident and death, the Medical Cause of Death, and Mechanism of Death.

External Provided Data will show the ICD-10 codes assigned to the case, as well as work-related codes if applicable.

### 3 Find Case: Example Search

#### EXAMPLE SEARCH: MALE BORN ON 1 JANUARY 1975 WHO DIED IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA IN 2015

This Find Case example will search for a male who is known to have been born on 1 January 1975, and died in a specific year in a specific jurisdiction.

#### Steps:

- Enter the Find Case screen.
- Click on the Jurisdiction drop down menu and select 'WA' for Western Australia.
- For Case Year below, select '2015'.
- Date of Birth can only be searched on closed cases, so Case Status should be set to 'Closed'.
- Enter 01/01/1975 in the Date of Birth field.
- On the right side of the screen, select 'Male' for Sex.
- Click Search.

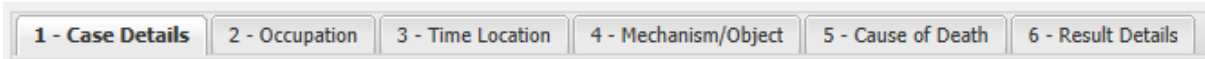
Jurisdiction:	WA	▼
Case Year:	2015	▼
Case Sequence:	<input type="text"/>	
Local Case Number:	<input type="text"/>	
Case Status:	Closed	▼
Date of Birth:	01/01/1975	<input type="text"/>
Date Notified Between (Month/Year):	>=	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <=

Surname:	<input type="text"/>	
Firstname:	<input type="text"/>	
Sex:	Male	▼
Court:	<input type="text"/>	▼
Post Mortem No:	<input type="text"/>	
Multiple Fatality Event (MFE):	<input type="text"/>	
	<a href="#">Search:</a>	

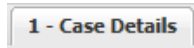
## 4 Query Design Screen

The Query Design screen allows the construction of a search query based on desired search parameters. As many or as few parameters can be selected from each of the five tabs that build the search as desired, and tabs that are not relevant can be skipped. The final sixth tab allows the selection of fields wanted to view in the results.

Broad and narrow searches can be run on the NCIS. A broad search would consist of a few search parameters (e.g. assault cases in NSW) and would have a large number of results. A narrow search by comparison would have more search parameters (e.g. assault cases for persons aged 18-50 in NSW where the mechanism of injury was stabbing) and return fewer results, as the search is more specific. Broad searches are useful for returning larger numbers of cases where details can be reviewed and cases identified which are relevant to the research. A narrow search will instead return a small selection of cases which are more likely to be relevant, but may not capture as many as a broad search would.



**Tab 1: Case Detail**



This first screen allows searches by variables such as age range, gender, date range, jurisdiction, intent, case type and more. Searches can be refined by selecting any number of variables.

Some tips for searching the Case Details tab:

- To search by dates and age ranges, select the Use Date Search Options tickbox located directly underneath the row of tabs. If these options are left blank, the system will search across all ages and date ranges.

Use Date Search Options

**Optional Date Search Criteria**

Age:	>=	Start:	<=	End:	Year(s)	Date Notified:	>=	Start:	dd/mm/yy	<=	End:	dd/mm/yy
Date of Birth (Month/Year):						Case Changed:	>=	Start:	dd/mm/yy	<=	End:	dd/mm/yy
						Coroner Closed:	>=	Start:	dd/mm/yy	<=	End:	dd/mm/yy
						Closed When:	>=	Start:	dd/mm/yy	<=	End:	dd/mm/yy

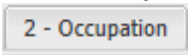
- Cases are recorded in the NCIS at both the **Notification** (reported to a Coroner) stage, and at the **Completion** (investigation closed by the Coroner) stage. The Notification and Completion tickboxes relate to the Case and Intent Type fields. To search by Intent, select the appropriate field from Intent Type. It is recommended to search by Completion for the final determination of Intent and Case Type.
- To search by jurisdiction, select the appropriate state(s) or territory(s) from the Case Jurisdiction menu. To search across all approved jurisdictions, click the 'Australia' tickbox below the menu. At least one jurisdiction must be selected or the system will not return any results.
- Keyword searches of documents can be conducted at the bottom of the screen. Remember to select at least one report type when keyword searching.

Text in Reports:  [Search tips](#)

Report Type:  Findings  Autopsy  Police  Toxicology

- It is recommended that **broader queries** are constructed rather than limiting searches by selecting more variables. The final tab of Query Design allows selection of which fields will be returned – results can then be exported to Excel and irrelevant records removed.

**Tab 2: Occupation**



The Occupation tab allows you to search by employment status, employment categories and industries, or the type of employment undertaken at the time of an incident.

1 - Case Details | **2 - Occupation** | 3 - Time Location | 4 - Mechanism/Object | 5 - Cause of Death | 6 - Result Details

Employment Status:	<input type="text"/>	
Usual Occupation:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
Occupation Text:	<input type="text"/>	
Incident Occupation:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
Incident Occupation Text:	<input type="text"/>	
Incident Industry:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>
Industry Incident Text:	<input type="text"/>	

Tips for searching on the Occupation tab:

- To search by Employment Status, select an option from the drop down menu. To search for more than one type of employment e.g. 'Unemployed' and 'Retired/Pensioner' these searches will need to be run separately and then the results combined together.
- The Usual Occupation field contains coded occupation types from the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification \(ANZSIC\)](#) developed by the ABS.



- To search for a particular occupation, it is recommended that searches are done on Occupation Text. This is a free text field and is required to be populated, whereas the Usual Occupation code field is not. Occupations may be recorded in various ways, so try multiple searches to cover the occupation of interest (e.g. 'nurse', 'nursing', 'nurs'). Only one occupation can be searched at a time, but results can be combined using the export function.
- The Occupation Code and Text can also be displayed on the Results page; if it is uncertain how the occupation of interest might be recorded, conduct a broad search and then check the Occupation Text field in the results and exclude irrelevant results.

### Tab 3: Time Location

#### 3 - Time Location

The Time Location tab allows users to search for activities and locations related to the deceased at either the time of the Incident, Death, the time Last Seen Alive or time Body Found. Location search options are on the left, and activity search options are on the right. The Activity Code is only available for the Time Location Type of 'Incident'.

To search on this screen, select an option from Time Location Type at the top of the screen. This ensures no duplicates will be returned, as some cases may have occurred at the same location for both incident and death.

The screenshot displays the '3 - Time Location' search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with tabs: '1 - Case Details', '2 - Occupation', '3 - Time Location', '4 - Mechanism/Object', '5 - Cause of Death', and '6 - Result Details'. Below the tabs, the 'Time Location Type' is set to a dropdown menu. The search area is organized into two columns. The left column includes 'Location Code - Level One' and 'Date From/To' (both with date pickers). The right column includes 'Activity Code - Level One', 'Suburb', 'Post Code', 'State', and 'Country' (all with dropdown menus). At the bottom, there is an 'Address Text' field.

Tips for searching on the Time Location tab:

- The Incident and Death location type and address can either be the same, or different. Some deaths occur almost immediately after the incident in the same location, while in others people may be transferred to a different location (such as a hospital) before death occurs. If the search requires knowledge of where the death itself occurred, select Death from the Time Location Type menu. This is useful for searches focusing on deaths in particular areas (e.g. suburbs, hospitals). However many users are more interested in the location of the Incident leading to death, rather than the Death location itself. An example of this would be cases involving falls from heights, as the location of the incident is significant in these cases.
- There are several levels for both Location and Activity codes. A broad Location Code search at Level One (e.g. 'Medical Service Area') can be performed or searches can then get more specific at Level Two (e.g. 'Hospital'). If the search is made on just Level One, all the codes in Level Two will be returned for the search.

- Activity Code also has two levels to search on. If however 'Sport and Exercise During Leisure Time' is selected, additional Sports Code levels will appear to enable searching of specific sport types (e.g. 'Racquet Sports' → 'Tennis'). When looking for a few different sports codes, run multiple searches and combine the results through the export function. A broad search can also be conducted on a higher level (e.g. 'Raquet Sports') and then any cases that are not relevant to the search can be removed.
- Searches can also be conducted by date (such as Date of Incident) and physical locations (such as suburb or post code).

#### Tab 4: Mechanism / Object

##### 4 - Mechanism/Object

The Mechanism/Object tab allows users to search for cases which feature specific mechanisms of injury or objects causing injury.

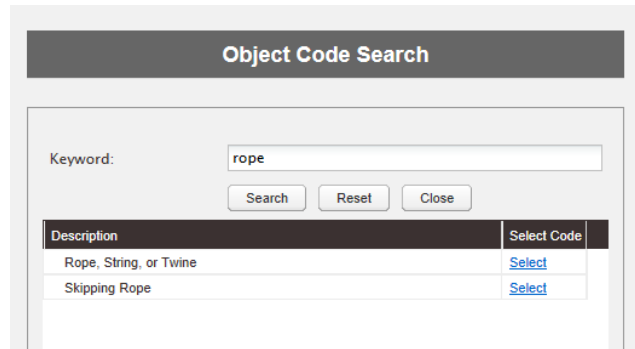
The **Mechanism** is the condition or circumstance in which the injury causing death was sustained (e.g. transport injury event, hanging). The **Object** is the physical entity that produced the injury causing death (e.g. passenger car, rope). In each case there may be multiple mechanisms and objects, and these are ranked in order of contribution to the death. There are three ranks: Primary, Secondary 1, and Secondary 2. The Primary rank refers to the direct mechanism or object, the Secondary 1 rank refers to the underlying mechanism or object, and Secondary 2 rank refers to the intermediate mechanism or object.

The screenshot displays the search interface for the '4 - Mechanism/Object' tab. At the top, there are six tabs: '1 - Case Details', '2 - Occupation', '3 - Time Location', '4 - Mechanism/Object', '5 - Cause of Death', and '6 - Result Details'. Below the tabs, there is a 'Rank:' dropdown menu. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'Mechanism of Injury' and 'Object or Substance Producing Injury'. Each section has a 'Level 1:' or 'Category 1:' dropdown menu and a 'Search' button.

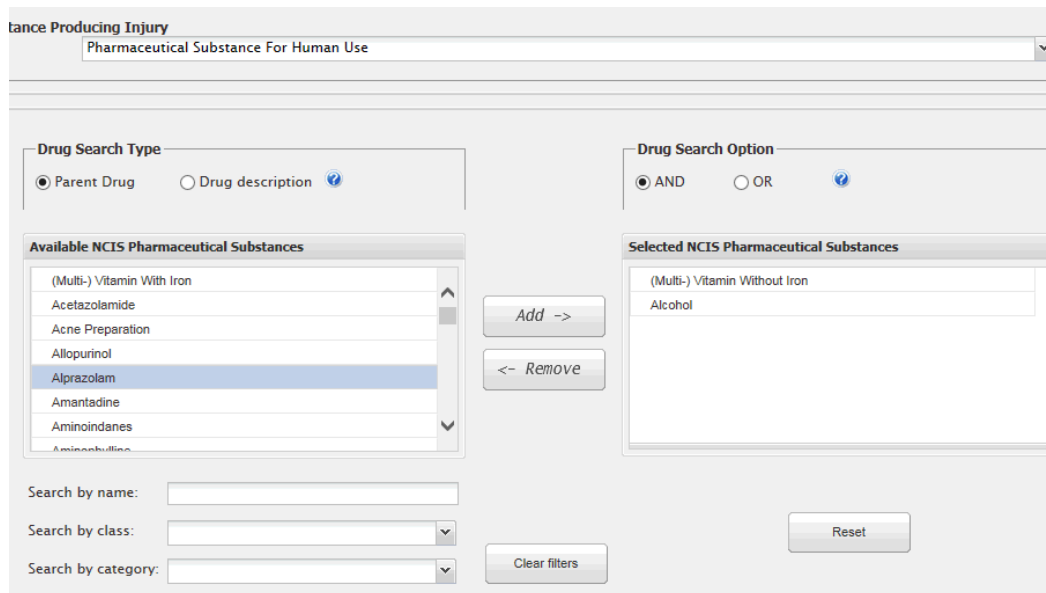
#### Tips for searching by Mechanism and Object:

- Searches can be done by *either* mechanism *or* object, or by *both* at once.
- As many or as few levels can be selected as desired for Mechanism and Object. The more levels selected, the narrower the search will be, returning fewer results.
- In some cases, there may be more than one Object / Mechanism of injury, and various ranks can be coded for one case. For example, the objects contributing to a death might be 'Passenger Car' (Rank 1 - Primary), 'Roadway' (Rank 2 – Secondary 1), and 'Tree, Plant' (Rank 3 - Secondary 2). Specific ranks can be selected at the top of the screen, however it is recommended to leave this blank when wanting to search across all possible involvement of the Mechanism or Object, regardless of its "coded order".

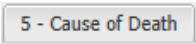
- Mechanism or Object terms can be searched for using the Search function. Selecting a result will fill in the appropriate level codes.



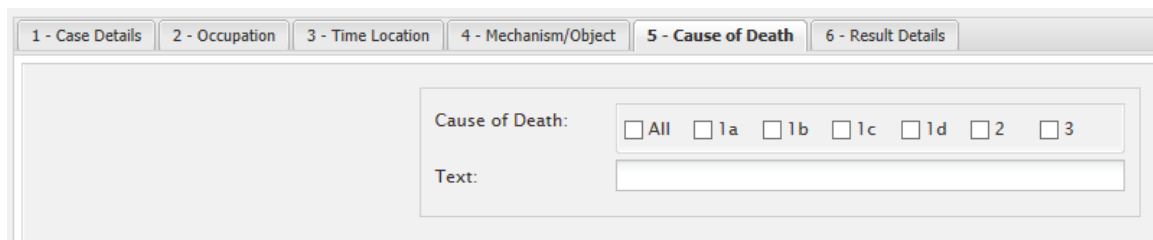
- If “Pharmaceutical Substance for Human Use” is selected in the Object field, a new section of the screen will appear that allows selection of one or more drug names from a defined list.



**Tab 5: Cause of Death**



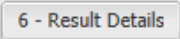
This tab allows users to search for cause(s) of death taken from the autopsy report. This is the medical cause of death determined by the forensic pathologist.



Tips for searching on Cause of Death:

- Ensure that **All** is selected for the Cause of Death tickbox options. The NCIS then searches for cause of death as a direct contributor at the time of the incident, or as a pre-existing condition that may have contributed to death. There can be up to six levels for cause of death (1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2 and 3).
- It is recommended that word stems are used to ensure all possible cases are identified. For example, 'gamma' will return 'Gammahydroxybutyrate' and also variations in spelling such as 'gamma-hydroxy-butylate'. Another example would be 'hang', which would also return 'hanged' and 'hanging'. Do not use the \* symbol when searching on this field.

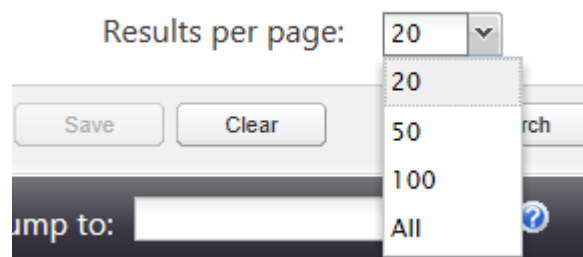
**Tab 6: Result Details**



The Result Details tab allows users to select the fields to be returned in the search results. There are over 80 fields to select from.

**Tips for using the Result Details screen:**

- It is recommended to select no more than roughly half of the tickboxes available on this page. Do not select them all – this will result in an error, as the system can only display 10,000 characters in a single row on the results screen. Selecting too many tickboxes will exceed this character limit.
- When selecting 'Age', make sure to also select 'Age Unit'. This is the time measurement of the number e.g. 7 days or 7 years.
- At the bottom of the page is the Results per page option. Select 'All' from this menu when intending to export results to Excel. This allows the system to export all results into one Excel spreadsheet.



## 5 Query Design: Example Searches

### EXAMPLE SEARCH 1: TRANSPORT DEATHS IN QUEENSLAND 2005-2015 INVOLVING HELMETS

This Query Design example will involve search for cases where the death involved mention of the presence or absence of a helmet in a transport injury event, in a specific jurisdiction over a set time period. The majority of the search parameters will be entered on the first tab, [Case Details](#).

#### Steps:

- Enter the Query Design screen and the first tab.
- Click on [Use Date Search Options](#). On the right side of the screen, use the [Date Notified](#) Start and End fields to input the following dates: 01/01/2005 and 31/12/2015.
  - [Date Notified](#) refers to the date the coroner was notified of the death. This is likely to be the closest to the date of death.

- Moving further down the screen on the left, select [Case Status](#): Closed.
- On the middle column, tick [Completion](#). Under [Case Type](#), select 'Death Due to External Causes'.
- On the far right, under [Case Jurisdiction](#), select 'QLD' for Queensland.

- Scroll to the bottom of the page where [Report Search](#) is located. Enter "helmet" in the [Text in Reports](#) search box. Select which reports to search; for this example, tick 'Findings' and 'Police' as they are the reports most likely to feature the search term.

- To make the search more specific than this – for instance, searching only for blunt force injury deaths during transport – move to the fourth tab, [Mechanism/Object](#).
  - To search for blunt force deaths, select [Mechanism of Injury Level 1](#): Blunt Force and then [Level 2](#): Transport Injury Event. Further details can be specified at Level 3 if required.
- Move to the [Result Details](#) tab. Select the fields to return; useful fields for this search would include those under Mechanism, Vehicle Crash, Object, Time Location, and Medical Cause of Death.
- Select "All" results per page
- Click Search.
- **Note:** Remember when searching by keyword that you will need to manually review the attached case reports to determine if the case is relevant or not. The keyword 'helmet' may appear in case reports without it being a factor in the person's death.

## EXAMPLE SEARCH 2: INTENTIONAL SELF-HARM DEATHS IN UNEMPLOYED PERSONS AGED 18 - 50 IN VICTORIA

This Query Design example will search for intentional self-harm groups in two specific subsets: age and employment status.

### Steps:

- Enter the Query Design screen and the first tab.
- Click on [Use Date Search Options](#). On the left hand side of the screen, use the [Age](#) Start and End fields to enter the following values: 18 and 50. Ensure the final drop down menu on this road is set to "Year(s)" for the age unit.

- Moving further down the screen on the left, select [Case Status](#): Closed.
- On the middle column, tick [Completion](#). Under [Case Type](#), select 'Death Due to External Causes'. Under [Intent Type](#), select 'Intentional Self-Harm.'

- On the far right, under [Case Jurisdiction](#), select 'VIC' for Victoria.
- Move to the second tab, [Occupation](#). Under [Employment Status](#), select 'Unemployed'.
  - To search for other values such as 'Retired/Pensioner', repeat the search and select this status.

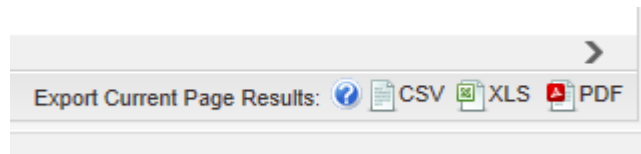
- Move to the [Result Details](#) tab. Select the fields to return; useful fields for this search would include those in Case Details, Mechanism, Object, and Medical Cause of Death.
- Select "All" results per page
- Click Search.

## 6 Exporting, Saving and Unloading Searches

The NCIS allows exporting of searches to other file formats, and also the saving of searches in Query Design. A saved search enables users to load the previous search criteria and either rerun the same search to identify any new cases of interest or slightly adjust the previous search and rerun it.

### Exporting Results

The results of any search can be exported. When on the screen of search results, the export options can be found in the bottom right corner of the screen.

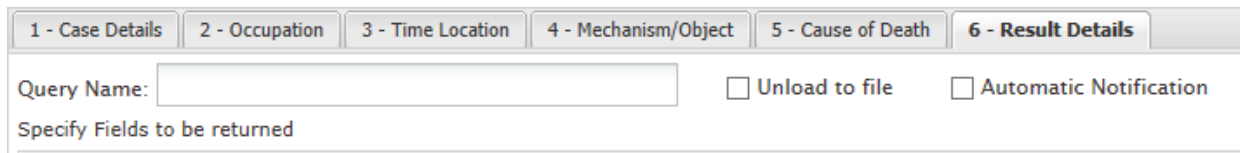


Click on the desired export format and save the file. The export will include every field selected for the search. Excel exports are useful as they allow users to sort the results using filters with the easy addition of columns or removal of irrelevant cases.

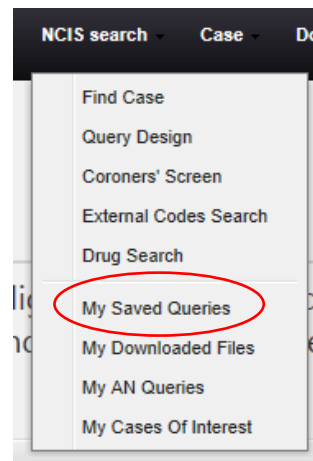
### Saving a Search

To save a search so the parameters can be accessed later, fill out the parameters of the search on the first five tabs as usual, and then select the sixth tab (Result Details) and enter a Query Name in the top field just below the tabs.

These options will be visible in the top left corner:



The Query Name should be something descriptive for later reference e.g. 17 Feb 2017 Fire Search. Once the name is entered, a 'Save' button will appear at the bottom of the screen next to 'Search'. Click 'Save' and the query will be saved into 'My Saved Queries', which is accessed from the NCIS Search menu.



My Saved Queries

ID	Query Name	Query Type	Query Last Updated	Run	Delete
351	ISH search 17 Feb	Saved	17/02/2017		
364	22 Feb 2017 ISH search	Saved	22/02/2017		
415	1-4 years 10 March	Saved	10/03/2017		
524	H2 2013 search	Saved	18/05/2017		
619	GLD 15-25 years 2012	Saved	07/07/2017		
664	Mechanism Mobility Scooter	Saved	26/07/2017		

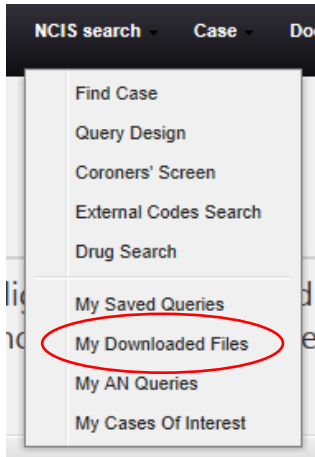
### Unloading a Search to File

A search can be run in the background of NCIS and then unloaded to file, ready for download. To unload to file, fill out the parameters of the search on the first five tabs as usual, and then select the sixth tab (Result Details) and enter a Query Name in the top field just below the tabs.

1 - Case Details | 2 - Occupation | 3 - Time Location | 4 - Mechanism/Object | 5 - Cause of Death | **6 - Result Details**

Query Name:   Unload to file  Automatic Notification

Specify Fields to be returned



Tick Unload to File next to the Query Name field. Once the name is entered and Unload to File selected, a 'Schedule' button will appear at the bottom of the screen where 'Search' was previously. Click 'Schedule' and the query will be scheduled to run. The search will be located in 'My Downloaded Files', which is accessed from the NCIS Search menu.

Once the search has been run, an email notification will be sent and an Excel file will be available to download from the 'My Downloaded Files' page.

### Automatic Notification

Searches can be configured to run on a regular basis and notify the user of any new cases that have been added that match their search parameters. This is known as the Automatic Notification option. To set up automatic notifications, fill out the parameters of the search on the first five tabs as usual, and then select the sixth tab (Result Details) and enter a Query Name in the top field just below the tabs.

1 - Case Details | 2 - Occupation | 3 - Time Location | 4 - Mechanism/Object | 5 - Cause of Death | **6 - Result Details**

Query Name:   Unload to file  Automatic Notification

Specify Fields to be returned

Tick Automatic Notification next to the Query Name field. Once these steps are done, a 'Schedule' button will appear at the bottom of the screen where 'Search' was previously. Click 'Schedule' and the query will be scheduled to run. The search will be located in 'My AN Queries', which is accessed from the NCIS Search menu.

Automatic Notification queries run once a week, and the system will email the user to notify them if any new cases have been identified. Return to 'My AN Queries' and find the search, then select 'Run'. The search will then run through the system and return any new results.



## 7 External Codes Search

While the majority of coded data on the NCIS has been populated by the originating coroner’s courts, there are also two sets of external codes that are provided by two organisations external to the coronial process: the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Safe Work Australia. The ABS assigns International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) codes to cases based on the cause of death, and Safe Work Australia assigns specific work related death codes to any case that is work-related according to Safe Work Australia definitions. The External Codes Search screen can be accessed from the NCIS Search menu.


### ICD-10 Code searches

The left side of the screen relates to ICD-10 codes. NCIS cases can have multiple ICD-10 codes assigned to the case depending on the complexity of conditions that caused the death. The ICD-10 (Underlying COD) relates to the underlying cause of death for the case.

Searches can be conducted for the ICD-10 Underlying COD, or across all ICD-10 codes. Enter the desired code in the Search boxes, and add any additional parameters by selecting the Use advanced search criteria tickbox at the bottom of the screen.

## Work Related Codes searches

The right side of the screen relates to codes assigned by Safe Work Australia to work-related cases. Searches based on ANZSCO (Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations), ANZSIC (Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification) and TOOCS 3 (Type of Occurrence Classification System) codes can be performed.

**Work Related Codes (Safe Work Australia)  (AU Only)**

Worker Type:

Occupation (ANZSCO 2006 - 4 digits):

Industry of Employer (ANZSIC 2006 - 4 digits):

**TOOCS 3**

Mechanism of Injury (2 digits):

Agency of Injury (3 digits):

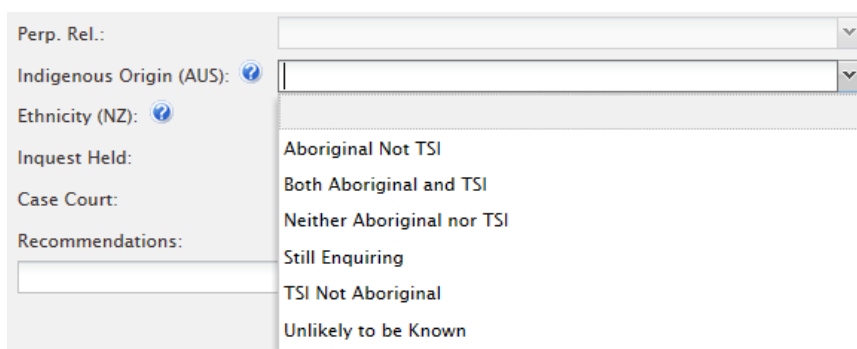
Breakdown of Injury (3 digits):

## 8 Indigenous Status

Indigenous Origin relates exclusively to Australian cases, while Ethnicity is exclusive to New Zealand cases. Both of these fields can be found on the first tab of the Query Design search screen. Ethnicity cannot be searched for Australian cases, even if the field is present on the search screen.

### Searching for cases where the deceased was of a particular Indigenous Origin

The Indigenous Origin (AUS) field can be used to identify where deceased were identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

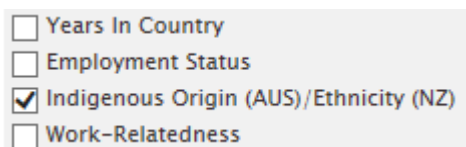


The screenshot shows a search interface with several fields. The 'Indigenous Origin (AUS)' field is selected, and its dropdown menu is open, displaying the following options: Aboriginal Not TSI, Both Aboriginal and TSI, Neither Aboriginal nor TSI, Still Enquiring, TSI Not Aboriginal, and Unlikely to be Known. Other fields visible include 'Perp. Rel.', 'Ethnicity (NZ)', 'Inquest Held:', 'Case Court:', and 'Recommendations:'.

It is currently not possible to search for all of the Indigenous values at once. Users interested in multiple indigenous values (e.g. Aboriginal Not TSI; Both Aboriginal and TSI; TSI Not Aboriginal) will need to run an independent search for each Indigenous value. Search results can be exported to Excel and combined to form one master list.

### Returning the Indigenous Origin value in search results

When wanting to view the Indigenous Origin value for relevant cases returned in any search, select “Indigenous Origin (AUS)/Ethnicity (NZ)” on the Result Details tab for the Query Design search.



The screenshot shows a list of checkboxes for search results. The options are: Years In Country, Employment Status, Indigenous Origin (AUS)/Ethnicity (NZ) (checked), and Work-Relatedness.

### Indigenous Origin identification

The identification of a person as indigenous is problematic within many health datasets. Coronial data also has the added complication of no possibility for self-identification. On the NCIS, coronial data entry staff will identify a deceased person as indigenous if it is mentioned within the documentation available within the Coroner’s file.

## 9 Geocoding Search

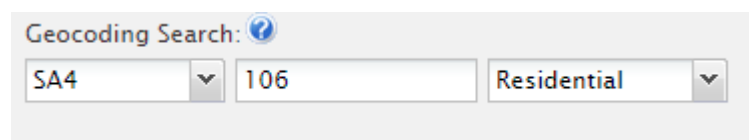
“Geocoding” refers to the process of converting a street address into geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude data), and also refers to the assigning of geographic boundaries (such as Local Government Areas) to latitude and longitude data. The NCIS currently uses the 2016 version of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) as the main structure for assigning boundary areas.

The NCIS Geocoding Search option allows for users to identify cases where the residential or incident address is within a particular geographic boundary area. The geographic boundary areas that can be searched on the NCIS Query Design are:

- Remoteness Area (RA)
- Local Government Area (LGA)
- Statistical Area 2 (SA2)
- Statistical Area 3 (SA3)
- Statistical Area 4 (SA4)

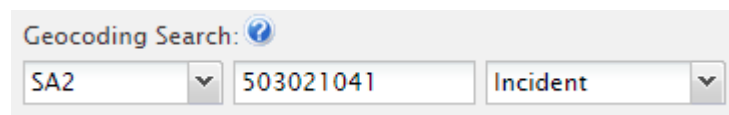
**Please Note:** These boundaries have been assigned to the deceased’s residential address and the address of the incident leading to death *only*. Boundaries are not assigned to the addresses of ‘death’, ‘last seen alive’ or ‘body found’.

For example, if searching for cases of persons residing in the Hunter Valley SA4 (code 106), the Geocoding Search on the Query Design Screen should be completed as follows :



The screenshot shows a form titled "Geocoding Search:" with a help icon. It contains three input fields: a dropdown menu with "SA4" selected, a text box containing "106", and another dropdown menu with "Residential" selected.

If searching for cases of incidents occurring in the Perth City SA2 (code 503021041), the Geocoding Search on the Query Design Screen should be completed as follows:



The screenshot shows a form titled "Geocoding Search:" with a help icon. It contains three input fields: a dropdown menu with "SA2" selected, a text box containing "503021041", and another dropdown menu with "Incident" selected.

It is not possible to search for multiple boundary areas at once. To identify cases that were located in multiple boundary areas an independent search must be run for each area. Results can then be combined using the Export function.

In order to determine the relevant boundary codes for your area/s of interest, please see the [ABS' Australian Statistical Geography Standard](#). For more information about the formulation of boundary codes, please see the [ABS' Census Geography Basics](#).

## 10 Technical Specifications

Please note that the NCIS is supported on the following internet browsers only:

- Internet Explorer versions 9+, or Microsoft Edge
- Firefox 5+ (preferably above 10)
- Chrome (recent releases)
- Safari 5+

Whilst attempts have been made to accommodate the various versions and types of browsers available, significantly older browsers do not conform to current web standards. As such, they cannot be guaranteed to operate correctly with modern websites.

## 11 Troubleshooting

### **I have set up my search parameters for all of Australia and hit Search, but received an error message saying I have exceeded the number of rows.**

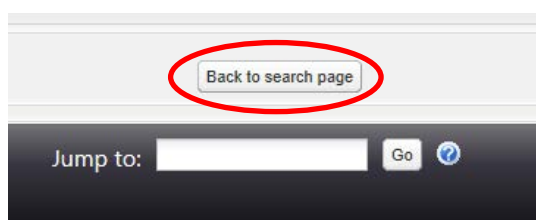
This error message means that the search is trying to return over 5,000 results. The NCIS has a limit of 5,000 cases that can be returned for an individual search, and the system will alert the user if the search exceeds this. Try narrowing the search through additional parameters, such as by year or by jurisdiction. Results can then be exported and combined to create one master list.

### **I've received an error message saying I do not have permission to search for a jurisdiction, but I should have permission for it.**

Users with Level 1 access to a jurisdiction have permission to search everything for closed cases, but not identifying information for open cases. This includes keyword searching on case reports, which are not available to Level 1 users for open cases. Attempting to run a keyword search without specifying closed cases will result in an error message. On the Find Case or Query Design screens, ensure you select 'Closed' for Case Status then run the search again.

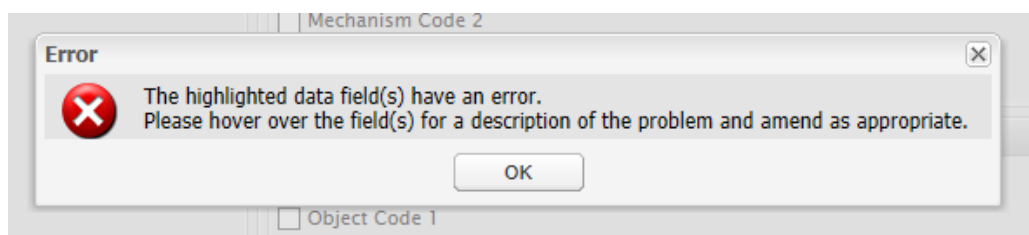
### **I ran a search and wanted to change my selections, but when I clicked back on my browser the search page was blank again. Can I return to my original search?**

The original search can be returned to but not using the browser's back button. On the search results page there is a button at the bottom of the screen that says 'Back to search Page'.

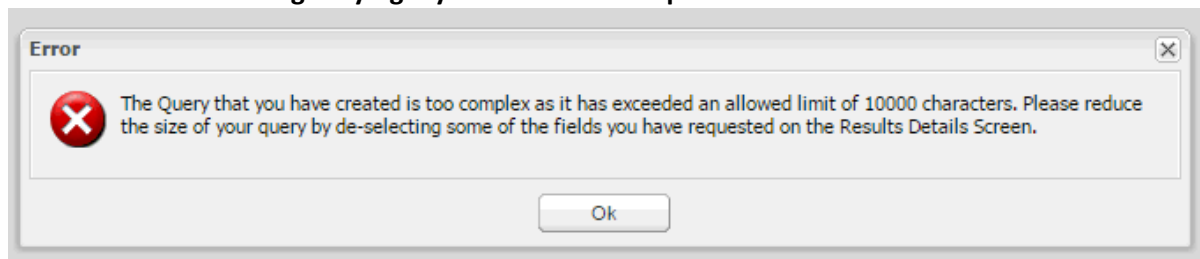


Click on this button and NCIS will return to the original search page where the parameters can be changed as desired.

### **I have set up my search but received an error message saying some fields have an error, but I can't find where this error is.**



The most common reason for receiving this error is users have entered a keyword search term, but have not selected which reports to search on. Return to the first tab of the Query Design and check if the keyword search box is highlighted in red. Tick at least one case report and the search should now run. This error may also occur for the same reason in the Medical Cause of Death keyword search; ensure one or more level boxes have been checked, and the search should run.

**I've received an error message saying my search is too complex.**

This message appears when too many fields have been selected to return on the sixth Query Design tab ("Result Details"). If everything is selected on this page, this message will appear. Untick some of the selections and then try searching again.

**I have my search results but need to export names and addresses. Can I do this on NCIS?**

Only NCIS staff can export fields such as names, addresses, and other identifying information. If this information is required in a spreadsheet format, please contact the NCIS for a data extract.

## 12 Glossary

### **Body Found**

This category is used to record information about date, location and address if a body has been found where the death was not witnessed.

### **Case Status**

Cases are added to the NCIS at the time of notification to the Coroner. During the investigation, the case status is listed as 'open'. Case details are updated throughout the investigation. On completion of the coronial investigation, when a cause of death has been determined and the Coroner has made a Finding, all case details and documentation are finalised and the case status is changed to 'closed' on the NCIS.

### **Case Type on Completion**

Case Type Completion is coded by staff in each coronial court in Australia and New Zealand based on information in the post mortem report and/or coronial finding which indicates whether the death was from a natural or external cause event.

### **Case Type on Notification**

This field is coded by staff in each coronial court in Australia and New Zealand based on the preliminary information available at the time of reporting of the death. Case Type on Notification is coded based on whether the death appears to be from natural or external cause events, and is to be used as an initial guide only. Information available at the time of notification is preliminary and subject to change following the coroner's investigation of the case and their findings. A final determination as to case type can be found in the Case Type on Completion field.

### **Completion**

Completion refers to determinations that have been made based on information from the completed coronial investigation. Any variable noted with 'Completion' such as Intent Type and Case Type is the final determination made.

### **Death**

Death refers to the moment when the person's death occurs. Similar to Incident, information relating to Death includes the date, the location and the address.

### **Ethnicity**

New Zealand cases refer to Ethnicity and this field is unique to New Zealand. Ethnicity refers to the ethnic group or groups with which individuals identify and is a cultural affiliation rather than race.

### **Incident**

The incident refers to the moment when the injury or incident resulting in death occurs. Incident information can include the date, activity undertaken, the location, and the address.

### **Geocoding**

Geocoding is the process of converting a street address into geographic coordinates of latitude and longitude. Geocoding also refers to the process of assigning geographic boundaries such as Local Government Areas (LGA) to latitude and longitude data.

### **Indigenous Origin**

Indigenous Origin refers to whether a person is identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

### **Inquest**

An inquest is a court hearing conducted by a coroner to determine the cause and circumstances of a person's death, and the person's identity. Not all investigations require an inquest.



**Intent Type on Completion**

This field is coded by staff in each coronial court in Australia and New Zealand based on the finding of the investigating Coroner. Intent Type on Completion is based on specific statements in the finding regarding the deceased's intent.

**Intent Type on Notification**

This field is coded by staff in each coronial court in Australia and New Zealand based on the preliminary information available at the time of reporting of the death. Intent Type on Notification is coded based on whether the death appears to be from self harm or unintentional events, and is to be used as an initial guide only. Information available at the time of notification is preliminary and subject to change following the coroner's investigation of the case and their findings. A final determination as to intent can be found in the Intent Type on Completion field.

**Last Seen Alive**

If the incident or death of a person was not witnessed, 'Last Seen Alive' is used to record information about date, location and address where the person was last known to be alive.

**Notification**

Notification refers to coding performed at the time of notification to the coroner. Information coded at the time of notification is preliminary and subject to change following the coroner's investigation of the case and their findings.

**Mechanism of Injury**

The Mechanism of Injury is the condition or circumstance in which the injury is sustained. E.g. 'Blunt Force'.

**Object**

The Object is the physical entity causing the injury. E.g. 'Tree'.

**Recommendations**

A coroner may make recommendations on matters connected to a death that relates to public health and safety, administration of justice or methods to prevent future deaths.

**Reportable**

All Australian and New Zealand coronial jurisdictions investigate deaths in accordance with their respective *Coroners Act*. Each *Act* defines what constitutes a 'reportable death' to determine which deaths must be investigated by a Coroner. The definition of a 'reportable death' may vary between jurisdictions, it is therefore not always possible to compare frequencies of certain types of deaths between jurisdictions.

## 13 Contact Us

For any queries about running a search, difficulty logging into an NCIS account or anything else related to the NCIS, please feel free to contact us.

**Phone:** +61 3 9684 4442

**Email:** [ncis@ncis.org.au](mailto:ncis@ncis.org.au)

[www.ncis.org.au](http://www.ncis.org.au)