



APPLICATION GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHERS

ELIGIBILITY FOR DIRECT ACCESS

Data contained in the NCIS is available for direct system access to authorised users, allowing them to view coronial case information via an online interface.

To be eligible for direct access to the NCIS, you must have:

- A bona fide interest in death and injury prevention or a statutory requirement to collect and publish data
- A clearly defined research topic or aim – ‘general’ applications are not accepted.

Government agencies, academic institutions, research centres, hospitals and non-profit organisations are eligible to apply.

Members of the public, the media and private organisations are not eligible to apply for direct access to the NCIS but can [request a data report](#) via the NCIS website.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Researchers applying for direct access to the NCIS are known as ‘Third Party’ researchers. There are several steps in the application process for Third Party researchers requesting direct access to the NCIS. Depending on the jurisdictions access is being requested for, there may be several ethics committees that need to review the application.

All applications for Australian data must be considered by:

- NCIS Access Liaison Officer
- NCIS Research Committee (NRC)
- Justice Human Research Ethics Committee (JHREC).

Applications seeking access to Victorian data (solely or nationally) must also be considered by:

- Coroners Court of Victoria Research Committee (CCOV RC).

Applications seeking Level 1 access to Western Australia data (solely or nationally) must also be considered by:

- Western Australian Coronial Ethics Committee (WACEC).

All applications for New Zealand data must be considered by:

- NCIS Manager and Access Liaison Officer
- Chief Coroner of New Zealand.

Further details on submitting to these committees are detailed below.

FEES

There is an annual fee for direct access to the NCIS that varies according to the type of organisation. For more information on the fee applicable to your research project, you can [contact the NCIS Access Liaison Officer](#)

ACCESS LEVELS

NCIS access is available in two forms that provide different levels of access to the information stored in the NCIS. When completing the application, consider which level is most suitable for your research needs.

- **Level 1 access** (Identifying access to closed cases and non-identifying access to open cases¹):
Level 1 users can view all coded data fields for closed cases including identifying fields: names, dates of birth, addresses and Indigenous Origin status. Level 1 users can also view the attached case documentation such as the coronial finding, post mortem report, police narrative of circumstances and toxicology report. This level of access is recommended for research and monitoring projects.
- **Level 2 access** (Non-identifying access to closed cases only):
Level 2 users can view non-identifying coded data fields for closed cases only. Level 2 access is recommended for projects that involve high-level statistical research without a need to review case circumstances.

Applicants seeking Level 1 access will need to clearly outline why identifying information is required and how the privacy and security of this sensitive information will be managed.

For more details on the data fields available in the NCIS, visit the [Explanatory Notes](#) page of our website.

TIMELINES

Applications for Australian data need to be submitted in line with the scheduled meeting dates of the various committees. These meeting dates are confirmed at the start of the calendar year, however may be subject to change.

¹ 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.

When starting an application it is recommended that you identify which JHREC meeting date you want your application to be considered at. All other ethics committees will need to consider your application either prior to or following the JHREC meeting. Before any research ethics committees review your application, the NCIS Access Liaison Officer must review your application and provide feedback.

In general, an application will take eight to 10 weeks from the time of submission to be considered by the JHREC and approved for access. This includes the time taken by the NCIS to review the application and provide feedback, submissions to other committees, such as the CCOV RC and the NRC, and any requests for additional information made by the JHREC.

REQUIREMENTS

There are some requirements to keep in mind when applying for NCIS access:

- If the applicant is from an organisation or institution with its own ethics committee, the project must have been approved by, or submitted to, this committee prior to the JHREC receiving the application.
- Applicants who are approved by the JHREC will be required to enter into an Access Agreement with the NCIS detailing the use of the data.
- As a condition of approval, applicants will be required to submit annual progress reports to JHREC.

A copy of any reports or documents to be published must be provided to the NCIS prior to release. Acknowledgement of the NCIS and the Department of Justice and Community Safety as the source of the data must be included.

APPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN DATA

GENERAL

All Third Party applications for access to the NCIS must be considered by the NCIS Research Committee (NRC) and the Victorian Department of Justice Human Research Ethics Committee (JHREC). This applies to both Level 1 and Level 2 applications.

To receive copies of the relevant application forms and information about the next available closing dates, [contact the NCIS Access Liaison Officer](#)

All application forms should be completed and submitted to the NCIS Access Liaison Officer. The application will be reviewed by the Access Liaison Officer, who will provide feedback until the application is finalised. Once the application is finalised, you will then be advised on the next steps of the process.

Your application will be considered by the NRC prior to the JHREC closing date. If your application is approved by the NRC, the Access Liaison Officer will submit your application

and any other relevant documents to the JHREC on your behalf for consideration at their next meeting. A copy of the NRC approval letter and your submission will be sent to you for your records. More information on requesting access to Victorian or Western Australian data is detailed below.

The JHREC will advise the Principal Researcher directly in writing of the outcome of the meeting.

If your application is approved by the JHREC, your organisation will be required to enter into a Access Agreement with the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety, on behalf of the NCIS. Once the Access Agreement is executed by both parties, all users will be required to sign confidentiality undertakings. User logins will then be issued to each authorised NCIS user. An invoice for the applicable annual fee will be sent to your organisation within four to six weeks of the Agreement being executed.

The NCIS closing date for accepting applications is the week prior to JHREC’s closing date. The table below outlines the relevant closing dates and meeting dates for submitting to the NRC and JHREC.

NCIS and JHREC meeting dates 2019			
NCIS closing date	NRC closing date	JHREC closing date	JHREC meeting date
Weds 12 Dec 2018	Weds 19 Dec 2018	Fri 21 December 2018	Thurs 7 February 2019
Weds 6 February	Weds 13 February	Fri 15 February	Thurs 28 March
Weds 20 March	Weds 27 March	Fri 29 March	Thurs 9 May
Weds 8 May	Weds 15 May	Fri 17 May	Thurs 27 June
Weds 19 June	Weds 26 June	Fri 28 June	Thurs 8 August
Weds 31 July	Weds 7 August	Fri 9 August	Thurs 19 September
Weds 11 September	Weds 18 September	Fri 20 September	Thurs 31 October
Weds 23 October	Weds 30 October	Fri 1 November	Thurs 5 December

VICTORIA

Applications seeking access to Victorian data (either solely or nationally) must be considered by the Coroners Court of Victoria Research Committee (CCOV RC) and endorsed by the Victorian State Coroner. Applications must be sent to the CCOV RC prior to submission to the JHREC.

The application form for the CCOV RC and JHREC are the same. Prior to submitting to the CCOV RC, the NCIS Access Liaison Officer must review the application and provide feedback.

Once the application is finalised, you will be advised to submit your application directly to the CCOV RC via research@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

The CCOV RC will advise the contact person directly in writing of the outcome of the meeting.

Once the application has been considered and a letter of endorsement received, this should be emailed to the NCIS Access Liaison Officer. The application will then proceed to the next step of review by the NRC.

The table below outlines the closing dates and meeting dates for the CCOV RC.

CCOV RC meeting dates 2019	
CCOV RC closing date	CCOV RC meeting date
Wednesday 16 January	Wednesday 23 January
Wednesday 6 March	Wednesday 13 March
Wednesday 17 April	Wednesday 24 April
Wednesday 5 June	Wednesday 12 June
Wednesday 17 July	Wednesday 24 July
Wednesday 28 August	Wednesday 4 September
Wednesday 9 October	Wednesday 16 October
Wednesday 13 November	Wednesday 20 November

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Applications seeking Level 1 access to Western Australian data must be considered and approved by the Western Australian Coronial Ethics Committee (WACEC). Depending on the nature of your application, this may occur before or after JHREC consideration.

Requesting Western Australian data only

If your project is requesting access to Western Australian data only, you must submit your application to the WACEC prior to submitting an application to the JHREC. [Contact the NCIS Access Liaison Officer](#) for the WACEC application forms and next closing date for submissions. Your application should be sent to the Access Liaison Officer for review ahead of the closing date. Once your application is finalised, the NCIS Access Liaison Officer will submit it to the WACEC on your behalf.

Once the application has been considered and a letter of approval received, this should be emailed to the NCIS Access Liaison Officer. The application will then proceed to the next step of review by the NRC.

Requesting national data

If your project is requesting access to all Australian jurisdictions, including Western Australia, your application will be submitted to the WACEC after it is approved by the JHREC.

Once the application has been approved by the JHREC, the NCIS Access Liaison Officer will email you with the WACEC application forms and next closing date for submissions. Your application should be sent to the Access Liaison Officer for review ahead of the closing date.

Once your application is finalised, the NCIS Access Liaison officer will submit it to the WACEC on your behalf.

The WACEC will advise the Principal Researcher directly in writing of the outcome of the meeting.

The table below outlines the closing dates and meeting dates for the WACEC.

WACEC meeting dates 2019	
WACEC closing date	WACEC meeting date
Thursday 7 February	Thursday 21 February
Thursday 28 March	Thursday 11 April
Thursday 30 May	Thursday 13 June
Thursday 8 August	Thursday 22 August
Thursday 26 September	Thursday 10 October
Thursday 21 November	Thursday 5 December

TASMANIA

The Tasmanian State Coroner is notified of any applications requesting access to Tasmanian data. Once your final application is received by the NCIS it will be forwarded to the Tasmanian Coroners Court for noting.

APPLICATIONS FOR NEW ZEALAND DATA

All Third Party applications for access to New Zealand data on the NCIS must be considered by the NCIS Access Liaison Officer, the NCIS Manager and the New Zealand Chief Coroner.

[Contact the NCIS Access Liaison Officer](#) for the relevant application forms for New Zealand access. The completed form must be submitted to the NCIS Access Liaison Officer. The application will be reviewed by the NCIS Access Liaison Officer and Manager, and feedback provided until the application is finalised. The NCIS will then submit the finalised application to the New Zealand Chief Coroner on your behalf for consideration and endorsement. The

NCIS Access Liaison Officer will contact you directly to notify you of the application's approval or to request more information.

If your application is approved by the New Zealand Chief Coroner, your organisation will be required to enter into an Access Agreement with the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety, on behalf of the NCIS. Once the Access Agreement is executed by both parties, all users must sign confidentiality undertakings. User logins will then be issued to each authorised NCIS user. An invoice for the applicable annual fee will be sent to your organisation within four to six weeks of the Agreement being executed.

New Zealand applications can be submitted to the NCIS at any time. The application and Access Agreement process generally takes about four weeks to complete.

APPENDIX: FLOWCHART FOR AUSTRALIAN APPLICATION STEPS

