

NCIS system update

Improving indigenous identification and country of birth data on the NCIS

November 2019

Data sourced from the Births, Deaths and Marriage registries (BDM data) has been integrated into case records on the NCIS to help strengthen national completeness of indigenous status and country of birth data.

This initiative helps to maximise the information available on the NCIS about deceased persons whose death has been reported to a coroner.

Enhancing key data

Indigenous identification and country of birth are important variables on the NCIS. They allow approved system users to monitor and analyse death trends involving persons of various backgrounds.

These variables are not consistently collected across the coronial system:

- Country of birth is listed as *Unlikely to be known* in approximately 36 per cent of closed case records on the NCIS
- Indigenous origin is listed as *Unlikely to be known* in around 25 per cent of records on the NCIS.

Recent studies have shown the benefit that data integration can have in improving the coverage of certain variables within data collections.

An Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019 publication found that combining a range of selected data sets with the National Death Index allowed for the identification of an additional 27 per cent of indigenous death records.¹

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019. Improving Indigenous identification in mortality estimates. Cat no. IHW 215. Canberra: AIHW.

Supporting death and injury prevention

An increase in the completeness of data about indigenous identification and birthplace on the NCIS will allow users to obtain a more representative picture of the prevalence and type of fatalities that involve people from various backgrounds.

The NCIS Unit conducted a comparison of coronial data and BDM data for deaths reported/registered between 2006 and 2015 to better understand the value the BDM data could bring to the system.

This comparison identified BDM data had a meaningful value for indigenous identification and birthplace in 99 per cent of instances where coronial data about these variables was unavailable on the NCIS.

SYSTEM CHANGES

Display of BDM data

Coronial data about indigenous origin and country of birth will continue to be displayed on each case record on the NCIS and be marked as originating from a coroners court.

BDM data is displayed separately but alongside the coronial data and marked as originating from the registry (see Attachment A, Figure 1).

Whenever a user requests the *Indigenous origin* and/or *Country of birth* fields to be returned from a system search, both data sources (coronial and BDM) will be displayed (see Attachment A, Figure 2).

Data coverage

BDM data is available for most² deaths reported/registered between 2006 and 2017³.

Additional data will be added into NCIS annually in line with the release of the Cause of Death Unit Record File (COD URF) by the Australian Co-ordinating Registry (ACR).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where does the BDM data come from?

BDM data about *Indigenous status* and *Birthplace* originates from the information provided to the relevant state or territory registry when a death is registered.

² There may be some records where a match between the NCIS case and BDM registration could not be confidently made. In a review of ten years of coronial cases reported between 2006 and 2015, 93 per cent of coronial records had BDM data that could be matched.

³ Data for deaths registered prior to 2006 is not available within the Cause of Death Unit Record File format.

The Death Registration application form (DRF) and/or the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) contain fields that relate to this information.

Why are the two data sources not consolidated to show one value in the relevant field?

It is important that the coronial data collected about a deceased's indigenous origin and country of birth continue to be clearly represented in the NCIS.

Separately displaying the two data sources supports transparency surrounding the origin of the data and allows users to determine their confidence in the values displayed. For example, should both the coronial and BDM data contain the same value, users can be confident it is an accurate representation of that variable.

What will happen if there is conflicting coronial and BDM data?

The NCIS Unit's comparison work indicates that in more than 90 per cent of cases where coronial data about these variables are available on the NCIS, BDM data is consistent with information provided by the coroners court.

In the small proportion of cases where the data contained in the coronial and BDM data sets are inconsistent, the NCIS Unit will not attempt to resolve these inconsistencies as there is no practical way to determine which data source comprises the correct value.

NCIS users who have access to data from both sources should determine which rules they will apply to produce an overall determination of indigenous identification or birthplace.

The NCIS Unit will develop internal rules about such data conflicts for use in its own reports and publications.

Do I need to conduct separate searches across the two data sources to identify relevant cases?

No. The NCIS search function has been designed so that users only need to enter their criteria in the one search field (the existing fields for *Indigenous origin* and *Country of birth*), and the system will identify any case records from either data source that match the values entered.

Do I need to redesign any existing saved queries?

No. As the fields that are used to search for indigenous identification or birthplace remain the same on the NCIS Query Design screen, your existing saved queries will still work. They will now simply search across both BDM and coronial data sources.

Should I rerun previous searches to identify more cases of relevance?

This is an individual decision. It may be useful to rerun searches across the database to find any additional cases based upon the information now available from the BDM. Factors such as the reporting period of cases being examined, the number and type of jurisdictions being

accessed and how much flexibility there is in relation to your case identification period will influence this decision.

Is there information about the coverage and limitations of the two data sources?

Data quality statements that relate to coronial and BDM sources for indigenous and birthplace data are available on the NCIS website under *About the Data – Data Sources*.

ATTACHMENT A

Figure 1. How BDM data will be displayed on an NCIS case record

The screenshot shows an 'NCIS No.' field at the top left and a 'Case Detail' header. Below the header, there is a section for 'Multiple Fatality Event: No View/Update'. The main form is divided into several sections:

- Personal Information:** Surname, Given Names 1, Given Names 2, Date of Birth, Date of Death, Age at Death (51), Sex (Male).
- Marital Status:** Married (inc de facto).
- Country of Birth (Coronial):** Australia.
- Place of Birth (BDM):** Tasmania.
- Years In Country:** 98.
- Indigenous Origin (Coronial):** Unlikely to be Known.
- Indigenous Status (BDM):** Torres Strait Islander.
- Employment Status:** Employed.
- PM No.:** (Empty field).
- Case Status:** Closed - Quality Assured.
- Residential Address:** Institution, Street, Suburb, Post Code, State, Country (Australia).
- Date and Time of Notification:** (Empty field).
- Coroner Closed Date:** (Empty field).
- Case Court:** ACT Coroners' Court.
- Case Type - Notification:** Death due to Natural Cause(s).
- Case Type - Completion:** Death due to Natural Cause(s).
- Intent - Notification (presumed):** (Empty field).
- Intent - Completion:** (Empty field).
- Work-relatedness:** Not work-related.
- Perpetrator Relationship:** (Empty field).

Red boxes highlight the following fields: Country of Birth (Coronial), Place of Birth (BDM), Indigenous Origin (Coronial), and Indigenous Status (BDM). Other fields are highlighted with black boxes: Surname, Date of Birth, Date of Death, Date and Time of Notification, Coroner Closed Date, and Street.

BDM data positioned adjacent to equivalent coronial data field. Data source is clearly labelled

National Coronial Information System

Figure 2. How BDM data will be displayed in Query Design search results

Query Design - Results

Please note: Cases which have been restricted will not appear in search results.

Status	Country of Birth (Coronial)	Place of Birth (BDM)	Indigenous Origin (AUS)/Ethnicity (NZ) (Coronial)	Indigenous Status (BDM)	COD 1a	COD 1b	COD 1c	COD 1d	COD 2
Closed		Not Stated	TSI Not Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islander	SEPSIS SECO...	URINARY TRA...			DEMENTIA, SC...
Closed		Victoria	TSI Not Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islander	ISCHAEMIC H...				
Closed	Australia	Queensland	TSI Not Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islander	Right-sided sub...				Cirrhosis of the...
Closed	Australia	Queensland	TSI Not Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islander	Coronary ather...				
Closed		New South Wales	TSI Not Aboriginal	Torres Strait Islander	Cardiomyopath...				
Closed	Australia	Australia	Unlikely to be Known	Torres Strait Islander	Multiple blunt tr...	Motor vehicle cr...			
Closed	Scotland	Scotland	Unlikely to be Known	Torres Strait Islander	ISCHAEMIC H...				
Closed	Unlikely to be Known	New South Wales	TSI Not Aboriginal	Aboriginal	BILATERAL PU...				
Closed	Greece	Greece	TSI Not Aboriginal	Aboriginal	Multiple injuries				
Closed	Australia	Tasmania	Unlikely to be Known	Torres Strait Islander	BILATERAL PU...				
Closed	United Kingdom	England	Unlikely to be Known	Torres Strait Islander	Ischaemic heart...				
Closed	Ukraine	Not Stated	Unlikely to be Known	Torres Strait Islander	ISCHAEMIC H...				MULTI INFARC...

Coronial and BDM data are returned side by side, and are clearly labelled to indicate the data source