

# Access management

## Using the intent data field for NCIS cases

These guidelines provide advice on the use and interpretation of the intent data field and codes on the NCIS.

Researchers must be aware of the conditions in their NCIS access agreement when accessing, analysing and reporting on data.

### What is the intent code?



Intent is a data field applicable to some NCIS cases. There are two separate intent data fields on the NCIS: *Intent – notification (presumed)* and *Intent – case completion*. The [NCIS Data dictionary](#) provides definitions for both of these data fields:

- **Intent – notification (presumed):** The role of human purpose in the event resulting in death as known at the time of notification of death to the coronial office
- **Intent – case completion:** The role of human purpose in the event resulting in death as determined at the completion of the coronial investigation

Intent codes are not applied to case types of *Death by natural cause(s)* or *Body not recovered*.

Further information about the context and coding for intent can be found in the [NCIS Data dictionary](#)

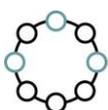
### Using the intent data field for research and monitoring

Intent is often vital to research and monitoring work conducted using the NCIS, for the purposes of finding relevant cases and researching specific types of cases. Some research may also involve collecting information for several different intent types for comparison purposes.

When using the intent data field and codes for NCIS cases it is important recognise that *Intent – case completion* is coded to reflect the decision reached by the coroner at the close of the investigation. This is the final determination of intent for the case.

### Using the *Intent – Notification (presumed)* coding

There may be cases coded in the *Intent – notification (presumed)* field which are determined to be a different intent by the coroner at the close of their investigation. Searching across both intent fields may result in cases being included that have a different intent for *Intent – case*



*completion* and are not of relevance. Combining the two when the intent is different upon completion risks undermining the coronial process.

Identification of closed cases in the NCIS by searching the intent data fields should use *Intent – case completion* **only**.

### Reporting on intent for open cases

If reporting on open cases using the *Intent – notification (presumed)* field, cases should be reported separately from those where *Intent – case completion* has been used as the search parameter and appropriate limitations noted regarding reporting of open case data.

### Reporting on intent for intentional self-harm cases

Research and reporting on intentional self-harm deaths is particularly sensitive and must be treated with caution. As above, identification of intentional self-harm cases in the NCIS by searching the intent data fields should use *Intent – case completion* **only**.

### Interpretation of the *Undetermined intent* code

*Undetermined intent* is coded where it is unclear what the deceased, or those involved in the death, intended the outcome to be in a set of known circumstances. Most often, where it is unclear as to whether the deceased intended to end their life by their actions or if the resulting death was unintentional. This is often noted by the coroner in their finding if they are unable to determine the intent of the deceased.

If a case's *Intent – case completion* field has been coded with *Undetermined intent*, this case **must not** be interpreted as an intentional self-harm death by researchers. A finding of an intent of intentional self-harm by a coroner has legal implications for the death and consequently must meet certain thresholds in each jurisdiction before this finding can be made.

When reporting on results, *Undetermined intent* cases should be reported separately from other intent codes and not conflated or grouped with other codes. It is inappropriate to use a blanket classification of all *Undetermined intent* cases as 'suspected suicides'.

### Further advice

- The [NCIS Coding manual](#) provides guidance and advice on data fields and common coding scenarios in the NCIS. This manual is available on the NCIS website and can provide further reference for how data fields are coded for cases
- Researchers may analyse and comment on the numbers of cases of each intent type for their work in a number of contexts, including jurisdictional differences in determination of intent

## National Coronial Information System

- An alternative to searching on intent codes is searching by ICD-10 Cause of Death codes assigned to NCIS cases by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. More information on these external codes can be found in the [NCIS explanatory notes](#).

For specific advice on how to search and export data fields on the NCIS, contact the [NCIS Unit](#)