The AIHW is a major national agency set up by the Australian Government to produce independent and authoritative health and welfare information and statistics.

Consulting under contract is a major part of what we do—it’s nearly 70% of our business. We have been consulting with both government and private sector clients for over 25 years.

Provided that a project fits with our mission, values and legislation, we can carry out virtually any task related to health and welfare data. This can include surveys and other data collection activities through to developing national data standards and data sets, linking data, analysing it, and writing objective and independent reports that are valued and respected by governments and the community.

In the interests of independence and transparency, nearly all of our work is released to the public—while also protecting individual privacy.

We have 320 expert statistical, administrative and communications staff in Canberra, backed by numerous data holdings, unmatched knowledge of the health and welfare sectors in Australia, robust governance arrangements, strong privacy and confidentiality controls, state-of-the-art business processes and infrastructure, and access to a network of government, research, education and private sector collaborators from around Australia.
Our services

The kinds of projects we can undertake for you include:

- researching, writing and publishing innovative health and welfare reports and other web and print outputs—drawing on a range of reputable data sources, including unpublished statistical information from our own data holdings

- reviewing or evaluating the effectiveness of health and welfare programs or policies

- developing national statistical standards and classifications, and registering these in our award-winning metadata repository, METeOR

- analysis and modelling of the impact of proposed health and welfare policy initiatives or changes to programs or services

- designing and undertaking complex data linkage projects

- building and managing information clearinghouses, disease registers and similar databases

- building the evidence base for Indigenous health and welfare policy development

- providing customised data analysis on a fee-for-service basis.
Our rates

Rates are based on cost recovery and are highly competitive with other consulting and research organisations. We are always happy to discuss charges with potential clients.

Our reputation

We enjoy national and international recognition for our statistical expertise, and as the nation’s premier source of data on health, welfare and housing assistance.

In addition to our skills in data management, analysis, presentation and reporting, our clients value our independence and integrity, our understanding of health and welfare issues, and our strong ethical standards and privacy protections.

We are also well respected for our ability to promote and achieve consistency among national, and state and territory statistics.
Our advantages

Accountability and independence
As an independent statutory entity we are accountable to the Australian Parliament, and are governed by a Board comprising independent and government members.

The Board is subject to the general oversight of the Minister for Health, but cannot be directed by the Minister unless he/she undertakes a consultative process with the states and territories, as set out in the AIHW Act.

Governance, privacy and confidentiality
We manage data professionally, with due respect for its sensitivity, and with privacy and confidentiality assured through legislation, rigorous data policies and procedures, and the scrutiny of a legally-constituted and independent Ethics Committee.

The AIHW is bound by 2 sets of confidentiality and privacy requirements—those contained in the Privacy Act and those contained in section 29 of the AIHW Act.

The Privacy Act establishes obligations on all private and public sector organisations for collecting, using or disclosing personal information.

Section 29 of the AIHW Act places very strong protections on the release of information concerning individuals and organisations. The AIHW cannot be forced to divulge such information, even by a court of law. The AIHW Act also recognises that AIHW must comply with written terms and conditions imposed by data providers.

Refer also to our Data Governance—in-brief brochure that contains more information about the AIHW’s robust data governance arrangements.
Reliability and productivity

Our reliability and productivity are second to none, with over 2,500 reports produced in the last 25 years. We are currently producing over 180 reports and other web-based outputs annually.

Collaboration

We collaborate with experts from around Australia, including Commonwealth, and state and territory health, housing and community services agencies; universities and research centres; expert advisory committees; and peak non-government organisations.

We work very closely with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, particularly in our use of Census and survey data.

Data holdings

Our health and welfare data holdings are substantial. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has named 10 AIHW-held data sets among its list of 74 Essential Statistical Assets for Australia. The 10 essential assets held by AIHW cover fields as diverse as housing assistance, homelessness, perinatal health, disability, cancer, hospitals and hospital activity, alcohol and other drugs, and mortality.
Skills
Our highly competent staff have contemporary skills and knowledge in:

• information needs for health and welfare policy, planning and service delivery

• statistical methodologies and analysis, including data linkage, validation, modelling and micro-simulation

• epidemiology, demography, psychology and sociology

• data and metadata development and management

• communications, specialising in health and welfare information and online reporting.

About 80% of AIHW staff are degree-qualified, with half of these staff also having postgraduate qualifications.
Data integration
We are increasingly being recognised for our leadership and expertise in data integration (also known as data linkage). We are one of only two agencies in Australia accredited to link sensitive Commonwealth data sets.

Data linkage provides strong value-for-money for clients because it uses existing data sets to gain new insights into health and welfare determinants and risks, health and wellbeing throughout life, and the use of health, housing and community services.

Data linkage work could provide new information on the importance of education, employment and housing to achieving good health, and, in turn, self-reliance. The data could highlight critical points where support or intervention would have the most benefit.

Refer also to our Data linkage services for clients brochure that contains more information about the AIHW’s data linkage services for clients.

Innovation
We produce innovative, clear and readable reports and other products that also provide a sophisticated level of informed analysis. The 570-page Australia’s health 2014, for example, adopts a new approach to reporting based on ‘big picture’ snapshots and feature articles on topics of current policy interest, backed by in-text links to more detail, and an Ozhealth app for iPhone and iPad.
For many data collections—such as for hospitals, cancer, and juvenile justice—we produce a mix of products, including user-friendly summary publications and web snapshots, comprehensive statistical reports, and data available as downloadable spreadsheets or as interactive data access and visualisation services with build-your-own-table facilities.

In addition to reports on specific subjects, our data holdings and data integration capabilities enable us to produce thematic reports linking material from several different subject areas. Such reports can yield new insights that can in turn lead to new policies and practices.

Another example of our innovative work is Validata™, a time-saving online data receipt and validation product/tool developed at the Institute. Validata™ can quickly pick up anomalies and unlikely occurrences in supplied data, and is now progressively being extended across AIHW data collections and to some of our data providers.
Our record

Outputs
We publish over 180 outputs each year, ranging from comprehensive national reports to technical documents and guides, to innovative web-based products. As required by the Parliament, our flagship reports, *Australia’s health* and *Australia’s welfare*, are published in alternate years.

We have an expanding range of web sub-sites, including for mental health services, specialist homelessness services and Indigenous health and welfare. We are increasingly using interactive data visualisation services on these sites.

Several interactive health and welfare data sets are publicly available on our website, and we have produced 3 apps available for free download from Apple’s App Store—*Ozhealth*, *Ozwelfare* and *Indigenous info*.

Robust and reliable data and evidence
We play a central role in developing performance indicators for national performance reporting in health, ageing, early childhood, education, housing and homelessness, disability care and closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage.

In recent years we developed the Specialist Homelessness Services data collection, including an online data collection portal and client management tool.
We are also continuing to work with the Department of Social Services to build and develop the National Aged Care Data Clearinghouse for policymakers, researchers and consumers. In a similar vein, for many years we have operated the National Cancer Statistics Clearinghouse, in collaboration with the Australasian Association of Cancer Registries. We have also been custodians of the National Hospital Statistics databases for over 25 years.

**Data integration**
We have developed linking techniques between residential aged care data sets and hospital care data sets to reveal new information about transitions between the two types of services for people who have had aged care assessments.

Similarly, we have been able to link data on child protection, juvenile justice and homelessness to explore patterns of behaviour and service use.

We have also been able to assess the effectiveness of cervical cancer vaccine programs in Victoria using data linkage techniques.

New projects include linking child immunisation data with health outcomes data, and exploring links and pathways between homelessness, income support and employment.

**Health and welfare surveys**
Some of the larger survey-based collections that we have undertaken include the National Drug Strategy Household Survey, the National Infant Feeding Survey, the National Social Housing Survey and the National Prisoner Health Data Collection.

**Health and welfare data standards**
The AIHW manages Australia’s national health, community services and housing assistance metadata items and standards through METeOR, our award-winning online metadata registry.
Contact us

For further information on how we can provide products and services for your organisation, please contact the AIHW via email

info@aihw.gov.au

or visit the AIHW website

www.aihw.gov.au

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