

# 3 CSTDA NMDS redevelopment project

## 3.1 Redeveloping the CSTDA NMDS

The process of redeveloping the CSDA MDS into the CSTDA NMDS was conducted in two stages of collaborative work involving the AIHW and the NDA:

- Stage 1: Preliminary CSDA MDS redevelopment project 1999; and
- Stage 2: CSTDA NMDS redevelopment and implementation project 2000–02.

This chapter provides some brief background to Stage 1 (Section 3.2), before focusing in more detail on Stage 2, the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment and implementation project, commencing in October 2000 (Section 3.3). The remaining sections provide details of the key activities and milestones under each of the redevelopment project plan components: project management (Section 3.4); data development and policy (Section 3.5); data transmission strategy (Section 3.6); and communication and training (Section 3.7).

## 3.2 Preliminary CSDA MDS redevelopment project 1999

In 1999, the AIHW was commissioned by the NDA to carry out the following work in relation to the CSDA MDS:

- a) An examination of recent and emerging changes to policies, funding arrangements and service structures, and their implications for administrators' data needs.
- b) A review of measures of 'support needed' and the development of nationally 'mappable' data items on client support needs.
- c) An examination of the main methodological issues facing each jurisdiction, including sampling and enumeration issues, and technological change.

In view of the Institute's charter and its role in the CSDA MDS collection since its inception, significant AIHW resources were also contributed to this 1999 phase of the redevelopment project.

The first step in establishing the information needs of national administrators was to distribute a comprehensive survey, developed by the AIHW in conjunction with a reference group, and completed by all jurisdictions, on behalf of the NDA. This was followed by six months of extensive consultation, analysis and an AIHW workshop attended by a range of NDA and other nominees. Following the November 1999 workshop, the key information needs of disability administrators were summarised by the AIHW as being:

- how many people were supported – and what were their characteristics and support needs;

- what was received – not just type of service, but some measure of ‘quantity’ of service provided by service type, e.g. staff hours, funding per consumer;
- from whom was it received – details of the service provider, e.g. size in terms of caseload, staff profile and hours; the agency’s role in the system, e.g. case coordinator or ‘secondary’ provider;
- for how much (in terms of cost to government, although there was also interest in the notion of ‘total cost’ to the service provider); and
- with what outcome. (March 2000 report to NDA, page 5-2) (See also Table 2.2.)

By March 2000, the AIHW produced a major report to the NDA, which included four main technical outputs:

- a list of potential data items for possible inclusion in the new CSDA MDS;
- a disability services information model;
- proposals for additional data development work, including specifying ‘outputs’ and counting rules, which would affect the collection methods; and
- suggestions for progressing the redevelopment, via refinement, field testing and implementation.

In the report, the AIHW presented two options for the timing of the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment. The options drew on input received at the AIHW–NDA workshop held in November 1999 and considered the need for data development (including indicators work), testing, communication and implementation, alongside the development of possible software tools.

- Option 1 presented a timetable providing for phased implementation over a two-year period. Full-year data from all agencies would have been available in late 2003. This was the preferred option of AIHW based on its past experience in project planning and implementation of data collections, managing and participating in data development and collection, communication with the field, and in the design and implementation of supporting software and systems.
- Option 2 presented a fast-tracked timetable for implementation, within just over 12 months from commencement. Full-year data would have been available in late 2002.

### **3.3 CSTDA NMDS redevelopment project 2000–02**

#### **Establishing the project plan and agreeing on timing**

In response to the AIHW suggestions for progressing the redevelopment (in the March 2000 report to the NDA), administrators decided on a brief planning phase, involving all major stakeholders, to plan the detailed design, testing and implementation phases of the proposed redevelopment. A planning workshop, attended by major stakeholders, was held in April 2000. The goal of the workshop was to develop a project plan to turn the vision for a new CSDA MDS – the data set and the enhanced collation framework – into a reality for stakeholders. The workshop laid out the groundwork for a plan that ultimately comprised:

- details of the work needed and how it would be carried out: data development, including refining and testing data specifications and collection methods in the field; the

development of information technology tools; communication with and support and training in the field;

- recommended roles and a management structure for carrying out the work;
- estimates of resources for all aspects of the work;
- recognition of current or very recent work in jurisdictions and the AIHW which might assist speedy implementation; and
- a considered view on a feasible implementation timetable, considering the tasks to be done and the views of all stakeholders.

In terms of timing, the agreed project plan was a hybrid of Options 1 and 2. The plan aimed for ongoing collection by all agencies from April 2002, within 18 months of project commencement. National data, based on data entry over a quarter, would be available by September 2002. It was hoped that the data entered in one financial year quarter would provide details about all service users accessing CSTDA services in the 2001–02 financial year. Thus, depending on the success of implementation, the April–June 2002 quarterly data were to provide full-year client data. Full-year client data, based on a full year of data entry, would be available in late 2003.

Following the preliminary CSDA MDS redevelopment work and establishment of an agreed project plan, the NDA commissioned the AIHW to redevelop the CSDA MDS collection. The redevelopment project began in October 2000. As with Stage 1, the AIHW contributed considerable additional resources to the redevelopment project between 2000 and 2002.

In summary, in light of the strong demand for more comprehensive data on disability services and their clients, National Disability Administrators and the AIHW agreed to pursue an ambitious redevelopment timetable. The agreed project timetable meant that interrelated project components would need to be pursued simultaneously. For example, it was agreed that the development of a data transmission strategy (and possible software development) would need to commence prior to the completion of data development processes (such as the finalisation of data items and data collection guides and forms). Careful communication would be required with the field to provide satisfactory forewarning of proposed changes to data items. In practice, some of these interrelated activities created serious challenges for the jurisdictional departments responsible for implementing the redeveloped collection and for the field. In particular, jurisdictions found it difficult to commence software development prior to the availability of final data collection materials. By December 2001, the NDA therefore agreed to extend the project timetable, to commence ongoing collection from October 2002 (six months later than originally agreed).

### **The components of the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment project plan**

The redevelopment process for the CSTDA NMDS was designed around four core interrelated components:

- project management;
- data development and policy;
- data transmission strategy; and
- communication and training.

Each of these components was to be progressed over time, in four main phases:

- Phase 1 – establishment and development;

- Phase 2 – field testing, communication and ongoing development;
- Phase 3 – ‘wrapping up’; and
- Phase 4 – implementation.

The exact timing of these phases changed during the course of the project, following the NDA decision in December 2001 to extend the overall timetable for redevelopment.

Work completed under each of the project components during the redevelopment is outlined in Table 3.1 and further details are included in Sections 3.4 to 3.7.

**Table 3.1: Key milestones in the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment and implementation project, 1999–2002**

	Project management	Data development and policy	Data transmission strategy (DTS)	Communication and training
<b>March–May 1999</b>	All jurisdictions surveyed about information needs and preferred collection methods			
<b>March–October 1999</b>		Detailed data development carried out		
<b>November 1999</b>		AIHW holds workshop with NDA nominees to assist in finalising preliminary work on redevelopment		
<b>March 2000</b>	AIHW reports to NDA on preliminary work for CSDA MDS redevelopment			
<b>April 2000</b>	Planning workshop (Melbourne) to develop an agreed project plan to redevelop the CSDA MDS			
<b>April–September 2000</b>		Decision and contracting processes		
<b>October 2000</b>	AIHW begins redeveloping the CSDA MDS			
<b>December 2000</b>	Facilitation and Implementation Group (FIG) nominated, and first meeting held (Canberra) AIHW develop draft privacy and data principles for FIG comment	Papers prepared for FIG meeting—data definition, management, communication, etc.	AIHW and NDA Liaison Group engage external consultants to research and advise on an appropriate DTS First DTS workshop held (Canberra) with all FIG members	Communication strategy developed
<b>January 2001</b>		AIHW complete Round 1 field testing in WA, NT, NSW, QLD and the ACT		First national communication newsletter released: 'CSDA MDS collection to be redeveloped' AIHW public and private web sites 'live'
<b>February 2001</b>		Indicator Development Workshop (Canberra)		
<b>March–April 2001</b>	2 FIG teleconferences held AIHW progress report to NDA (including report from external consultants on the appropriate DTS for the new collection)		Data transmission strategy report available (SMS)	Second national communication newsletter release: 'CSDA MDS redevelopment: field testing about to begin'

**Table 3.1 (continued): Key milestones in the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment and implementation project, 1999–2002**

	<b>Project management</b>	<b>Data development and Policy</b>	<b>Data transmission strategy (DTS)</b>	<b>Communication and training</b>
<b>May 2001</b>		<p>AIHW and Disability Services Queensland (DSQ) conduct consumer discussion group for Round 2 field testing (Brisbane)</p> <p>AIHW trains NSW staff in Round 2 field testing procedures</p>	<p>Data transmission advisory group established to provide advice regarding software development</p>	
<b>May–June 2001</b>	<p>AIHW progress report to NDA—data development and policy, data transmission, and communication and training</p>		<p>Data Transmission Strategy (DTS) Workshop 1 (Adelaide)—to develop functional, environmental and implementation requirements</p> <p>DTS Workshop 2 (Adelaide)—to assess the merits of existing software tools, namely HACCC e-form and Western Australia’s ACDC</p>	
<b>July–August 2001</b>	<p>FIG meeting (Canberra)</p> <p>AIHW progress report to NDA—progress report, key features of field testing and software testing, live pilot, etc.</p>	<p>Round 2 field testing complete (AIHW testing with jurisdictions, jurisdiction testing with funded agencies, AIHW – jurisdiction testing with service users)</p>	<p>NDA liaison group teleconference—discuss the strategy for implementing the recommendations in the DTS report</p> <p>All jurisdictions agree to commence developing and testing optional software for use in April 2002 live pilot and beyond</p> <p>AIHW release the draft national Data Transmission and Technical Guide</p>	
<b>September 2001</b>		<p>AIHW complete draft national collection materials for Round 3 field testing</p>		
<b>October 2001</b>		<p>AIHW Ethics Committee approval obtained for draft Privacy and Data Principles</p> <p>AIHW attend, present and provide advice at Round 3 field testing workshop in the NT (Darwin)</p>		<p>Third national communication newsletter released: ‘CSDA MDS redevelopment: final testing starting soon’ (including all data items potentially in the new collection)</p>
<b>November 2001</b>				<p>Training strategy developed by AIHW in consultation with the NDA Liaison Group</p>

**Table 3.1 (continued): Key milestones in the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment and implementation project, 1999–2002**

	<b>Project management</b>	<b>Data development and Policy</b>	<b>Data transmission strategy (DTS)</b>	<b>Communication and training</b>
<b>November–December 2001</b>	Series of FIG teleconferences—field testing, April live pilot, communication, data principles, timing, etc. AIHW progress report to NDA—project update, final proposed data items, implementation issues and risks NDA requests AIHW to provide a revised timetable following field testing. Timetable developed and agreed by all.	AIHW conduct Round 3 field testing workshop in ACT (Canberra) Round 3 field testing complete (jurisdiction testing with funded agencies and service users)		AIHW engage external training contractors (in consultation with NDA Liaison Group)
<b>February 2002</b>	FIG/Network teleconference—revised timetable, communication, 2002 snapshot collection AIHW progress report to NDA—suggested data items for inclusion in the 2002 snapshot collection	'Final' national materials available (i.e. from this point onwards, no changes are made to data items or codes in the Data Guide, forms, Data Transmission and Technical Guide, etc.)		Fourth national communication newsletter released: 'CSTDA NMDS redevelopment: Project timetable extended after completion of field testing' (included new timetable and final data items included in the CSTDA NMDS)
<b>May 2002</b>	FIG/Network teleconference—communication and training Final 'snapshot' collection for NSW, VIC QLD, SA, TAS, ACT and NT AIHW progress report to NDA			External training consultants complete training in each jurisdiction (for jurisdiction staff)
<b>June 2002</b>	Redeveloped CSTDA NMDS used in full-year collections by Commonwealth and Western Australia			Fifth national communication newsletter released: 'Redeveloped CSTDA NMDS now being introduced'
<b>July 2002</b>	FIG/Network teleconference			
<b>August 2002</b>		Final national materials available for jurisdictions and on AIHW web site		
<b>September 2002</b>	FIG/Network teleconference AIHW and jurisdictions finalise implementation plans and procedures			
<b>October 2002</b>	<b>Implementation</b>			

## 3.4 Project management

The redevelopment project was managed by a process reflecting the existing relationships between the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the National Disability Administrators, and the State, Territory and Commonwealth government departments responsible for disability services and the ongoing management of the CSDA MDS snapshot collections. The AIHW was the project manager for the redevelopment project, and its role, together with the other 'key players', is described in Box 3.1.

Throughout the redevelopment project FIG members attended two face-to-face meetings and eight teleconferences. In addition, most FIG members attended the face-to-face workshop on indicators and a number participated in two additional workshops to develop the national technical specifications following discussions on the data transmission strategy. The AIHW also visited all jurisdictions at least once during the redevelopment project to field test and/or to participate in jurisdiction training. The redevelopment project demonstrated clearly that, while teleconferences are a useful and efficient way to exchange information, they work best if complemented by periodic face-to-face meetings allowing multilateral discussions.

### **Box 3.1: The role of ‘key players’ in the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment project**

#### **National Disability Administrators (NDA)**

*NDA comprise the heads of government disability services throughout Australia. Having commissioned the redevelopment of the CSDA MDS, the NDA were responsible for making key decisions during the course of the project, including sign-off at key points during the project.*

#### **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)**

*The AIHW was responsible for project management, data development and the coordination of information technology development, communication and training. The Institute had ultimate responsibility for formulating recommendations, based on the input and advice of Facilitation and Implementation Group (FIG) members, for decision by the NDA.*

#### **Facilitation and Implementation Group (FIG)**

*A Facilitation and Implementation Group was established at the outset of the redevelopment project to provide advice and assistance to the AIHW. The membership of FIG comprised:*

- *representatives from all jurisdictions with responsibility for advice, liaison, and a range of operational responsibilities for the redevelopment;*
- *three non-government and consumer representatives: one nominee each from ACROD and the National Caucus of Disability Consumer Organisations, and one non-government member of the National Community Services Data Committee, invited to join the FIG on the basis of individual expertise; and*
- *the core members of the AIHW project management team.*

*The FIG was not a decision making body. Rather, the overall role of FIG members was to support the project in a range of ways ensuring that:*

- *the right information was efficiently made available for use on the project;*
- *communication was effective; and*
- *the most appropriate people and organisations were involved in and informed about the redevelopment.*

*The method of achieving these overall goals varied according to the membership role, as follows.*

*Members representing jurisdictions – these members were effectively jurisdictional coordinators or ‘key facilitators’, with responsibility for a range of operational tasks, including:*

- *communication within their own jurisdictional administration and also with service providers in their jurisdiction;*
- *field testing in their jurisdiction, including facilitating appropriate NGO involvement;*
- *ensuring the timely development of new data processing systems;*
- *providing advice and information to project management – including locating the right people in each jurisdiction to respond to or undertake different tasks, and getting responses to AIHW back on time;*
- *ensuring jurisdictional input to the data transmission strategy; and*
- *acting as the conduit for communication within their own jurisdiction, including arranging mailouts to the field.*

*Non-government organisation and consumer representatives – these members were to participate in FIG meetings, providing advice on all aspects of the redevelopment, including:*

- *data needs of the sector;*
- *field testing (including suitable sites);*
- *data transmission strategies; and*
- *communication products and methods (for instance strategic use of existing channels of communication).*

Throughout the redevelopment project, the AIHW, as project manager, worked with:

- the FIG, in the first instance, developing a policy document detailing its roles and responsibilities (for NDA endorsement);
- the NDA Liaison Group, with representatives from Victoria, the Commonwealth and Tasmania. This group had the role of facilitating communication between the AIHW and the NDA, providing high level advice to the AIHW, and representing the NDA in the various sub-contracting arrangements required of the AIHW throughout the redevelopment (i.e. elements of the data transmission strategy and training were sub-contracted by the AIHW to specialist organisations);
- a Data Transmission Advisory Group, comprising FIG representatives from Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia (in the middle stages of the project); and
- contracted trainers in the later stages of the project.

The AIHW role was overall project management, including to:

- organise, facilitate and document continuing communication and meetings with key stakeholders (FIG, NDA Liaison Group and the NDA);
- prepare a series of progress reports for the NDA;
- coordinate the preparation of national communication newsletters to the field;
- contract and manage two external consultancies, namely:
  - SMS Consulting to work with the AIHW and FIG to develop the CSTDA NMDS data transmission strategy and conduct a number of workshops to establish the key requirements of possible CSTDA NMDS software; and
  - Age Communications to develop training materials (based on AIHW technical collection materials) and deliver training to every jurisdiction.
- obtain AIHW Ethics Committee approval for the proposed privacy and data principles and procedures for the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS and coordinate the agreement of all jurisdictions to the proposed policies and practices;
- coordinate and participate in three rounds of field testing (see Chapter 4 for further details);
- coordinate comments in relation to various rounds of draft data collection materials for the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS; and
- monitor and encourage adherence to agreed timelines.

As indicated earlier, the redevelopment project timetable was extended in December 2001 following Round 3 field testing. In doing so, the planned April live pilot was dropped and the implementation of the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS was rescheduled to October 2002 instead of July 2002. This also meant that agencies funded by New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory were asked to participate in a final snapshot collection in May 2002. As in previous collections, agencies funded by Western Australia and the Commonwealth identified service users who were seen on a selected snapshot day in June 2002, as part of their full-year collections.

Table 3.1 (column 2) provides a timeline of the major project management milestones throughout the redevelopment project.

## 3.5 Data development and policy

The redevelopment project plan identified a number of key areas of data development work essential to the project. The main areas of work undertaken throughout the project are listed below together with references within this report for further information:

- developing data items and their definitions (Chapter 5);
- developing output and outcome indicators (Chapter 8);
- field testing (Chapter 4);
- developing privacy and data principles (Chapter 7); and
- preparing national materials for the CSTDA NMDS collection (Chapter 6).

A number of key data development and policy tasks were undertaken early in the redevelopment and implementation project. These included:

- the development of policy documents detailing FIG roles and responsibilities, data principles, the communication strategy and the field testing strategy;
- an indicators development workshop, with representation from all jurisdictions, as well as consumer and non-government representatives and a representative from the Productivity Commission (see Chapter 8 for further details relating to the indicators workshop);
- a draft CSTDA NMDS data dictionary prepared by the AIHW, with further work continuing on refining the data definitions contained within it; and
- the completion of Round 1 field testing by the AIHW (see Chapter 4 for further details).

From mid-2001, data items and key products were further developed, refined and tested, together with the associated concepts and collection methodology. Two rounds of field testing were conducted (Rounds 2 and 3) with funded agencies, consumers and jurisdictions (see Chapter 4 for further details). In December 2001, following Round 3 field testing, the NDA approved the recommended data items for inclusion in the CSTDA NMDS, service types, output quantity measures and the layout of all collection materials.

AIHW Ethics Committee approval was obtained in October 2001 for the draft Privacy and Data Principles for the CSTDA NMDS. These principles were placed in the public domain for comment and included in Round 3 field testing documentation (see Chapter 7 for further details).

Data development work in December 2001 to March 2002 focused on finalising the key CSTDA NMDS materials for use in the national training. The collection forms and Data Guide were finalised, and forwarded to the training contractors to incorporate into the training strategy.

Following the amendment of the redevelopment project timetable in December 2001, some extra data development work was undertaken to strategically use the final 2002 snapshot collection. Data items that appeared in previous snapshot collections and were modified in the redeveloped collection were included in the 2002 snapshot collection, as they did not require training, for example the reclassification of 'service types'. Introducing these revised data items enabled funded agencies to move forward towards the new collection. Strategic use of the 2002 snapshot collection also enabled 'staged' implementation of the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS collection while maintaining national consistency.

By April 2002 the majority of data development work was completed. All key materials and documents were in final draft and were 'frozen' during the national training sessions. The national training served as a 'reality check' on all CSTDA NMDS materials, and following the training a number of minor clarifications were made to the materials. The AIHW made a commitment to all jurisdictions that no data items, codes or specifications would change as a result of the national training. All collection materials were finalised and placed in the public domain in August 2002.

During this last phase all jurisdictions confirmed their commitment to the Privacy and Data Principles, by signing an undertaking of endorsement of the CSTDA NMDS privacy arrangements.

Table 3.1, column 3, provides a timeline of the major data development milestones throughout the redevelopment and implementation project.

## 3.6 Data transmission strategy

The area of data transmission was probably the most fluid at the outset of the redevelopment project:

- While it was clear that CSTDA NMDS data would be transmitted from agencies to jurisdictions, and from jurisdictions to the AIHW, the actual methodology for achieving this data transmission (including the possible development of a software tool and associated products and support tools) was still to be investigated.
- It was clear that the data transmission and data development components of the redevelopment project were intricately linked. That is, the data transmission strategy would need to align with the disability services information model and other data development work, particularly on organisational units and linkage keys. This would enable data to be collected from different (but specified) 'levels' within organisations and related (via linkage keys) to administrative data on agency funding, as well as the client and service profile of the related outlets. However, the work on organisational units and linkage keys had yet to be completed.
- The April 2000 planning workshop considered that the investigation and development of a data transmission software product was an intrinsic part of the CSDA MDS redevelopment. However, there were varied views as to how nationally uniform it could be. Some jurisdictions indicated they would want to use their own specific software, while others argued the benefit to the non-government sector if there were a nationally uniform product (especially for large organisations working across a number of jurisdictions). Firming up on the parameters of a possible software product was therefore to be an early task of the project.

The work on data transmission was designed around eight major tasks, possibly to be revised pending an early NDA decision on the development of a software product or products. It was agreed that a consultant would be engaged by the AIHW to develop a data transmission strategy and present options for NDA consideration. Pending NDA decision, the remaining proposed tasks may need to be revised (i.e. some were only to be implemented if the NDA agreed that development of a software tool was required).

The eight key tasks for the data transmission component of the project were:

1. Develop data transmission strategy
2. Prepare tender specification for software
3. Select software developer
4. Develop and alpha test IT product
5. Refine and beta test IT product
6. Prepare documentation and learning products
7. Design and test central databases in each jurisdiction and in the AIHW
8. Implementation

In December 2000, the project management team, in conjunction with the NDA Liaison Group, engaged external consultants (SMS Consulting) to investigate and report on options for an appropriate data transmission strategy (DTS) for the CSTDA NMDS. An initial workshop was conducted and attended by all FIG members and the consultants to first define the term 'data transmission strategy' and then to discuss possible elements of such a strategy. Following the workshop the project consultants visited each jurisdiction to:

- gain an understanding of the jurisdiction's view of the 'organisational unit' level that will transmit data to jurisdictions;
- obtain an overall profile of the funded agencies and service type outlets, in terms of their use of information technology and information systems;
- gain an understanding of how jurisdictions currently operate, in terms of collecting and collating data from funded agencies, and in transmitting the annual data to the AIHW;
- identify any candidates for software systems that could meet with jurisdiction and/or funded agency/service type outlet needs nationally or across a number of jurisdictions; and
- discuss with jurisdictions any weaknesses, threats or risks in the data transmission strategy approach.

Following discussions with each jurisdiction and the AIHW, the consultants produced a Data Transmission Strategy Report. This report highlighted recommendations at each of the three possible 'levels' of data transmission involved in the CSTDA NMDS collection:

1. Data transmission between agencies and jurisdictions should be:
  - supported by the development of nationally consistent transmission software, based either on the Western Australian ACDC software, or on the HACC e-form. Advantages and disadvantages of both options were discussed and further exploration and costing of both options was recommended in the course of specifying national system and technical requirements;
  - further supported by information, training and other initiatives to enhance data quality; and
  - flexible and allow agencies to use other existing data collection and transmission methods, including paper forms, local IT and commercial IT solutions.
2. Data transmission between jurisdictions and the AIHW is 'best practice' but could be improved by:

- jurisdictions enhancing efforts to provide the AIHW with data conforming to agreed formats and edit checks; and
  - the AIHW providing jurisdictions with more formalised feedback about data quality.
3. Software support for information management and data transmission within and among agencies was also investigated but was not recommended for national development at this stage. It was, however, recommended that liaison with commercial software vendors be undertaken in addition to the general publication of technical specifications, so as to actively promote the development of suitable software.

In May 2001 SMS Consulting were re-contracted to work with FIG to:

- (a) develop a technical specification for data transmission of the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS between funded agencies and jurisdictions; and
- (b) assess the relative merits of existing software tools, namely the Home and Community Care (HACC) e-form and Western Australia's ACDC.

To assist the consultants with these tasks the Data Transmission Advisory Group, together with a number of funded agencies from Victoria and South Australia, AIHW project staff and software experts for HACC e-forms and ACDC, attended and participated in two data transmission workshops. Following these workshops the consultants produced a 'Technical specification and evaluation of data transmission tool' report. The report recommended that the NDA proceed with the development of a data transmission tool (or tools) and included advice about the appropriate steps required to progress successfully.

Guided by this report, each jurisdiction made decisions regarding the development of software for optional use by agencies when transmitting data to jurisdictions. At this time all jurisdictions reconfirmed their commitment to accept paper transmission and align forms with the national specifications.

To test software tools, it was proposed that for all jurisdictions, except the Commonwealth and Western Australia, a full live pilot would be conducted in April 2002 and run for at least four weeks. A primary aim of the live pilot was to test data transmission tools and thereby enable refinements to the software and other materials to be made prior to full implementation in July 2002.

The development and testing of data transmission tools was the responsibility of each jurisdiction. A number of jurisdictions expressed interest in pursuing the Western Australian software tool (ACDC) for use within their State/Territory, while the remaining jurisdictions either modified existing tools or tendered to develop new tools.

During July 2001 the AIHW developed a draft national Technical and Data Transmission Guide. This guide was made available to all jurisdictions and placed in the public domain, so that any software development would be in line with the national CSTDA NMDS specifications.

Towards the end of 2001 the availability of data transmission software for the planned April live pilot became an issue. The AIHW, as project manager, proposed a shorter live pilot in April to reduce the burden on funded agencies that were adopting the software tools. It was however eventually agreed by the NDA to revise the project timeline and drop the April live pilot, allowing jurisdictions extra time to develop and test software products.

In the final phase of the project, jurisdictions (except for Western Australia and the Commonwealth, where updated software had already been introduced in June 2002) continued to develop and test data transmission software, develop technical help desk

arrangements, finalise supporting technical documentation and amend jurisdiction databases. A number of jurisdictions indicated that they would participate in a November test transmission, designed to test both software and the data transmission processes (i.e. between funded agencies and jurisdictions, and jurisdictions and the AIHW).

The major data transmission milestones throughout the redevelopment and implementation project are highlighted in Table 3.1, column 4.

## 3.7 Communication and training

The development of and commitment to a communication strategy throughout the redevelopment project was designed to facilitate consistent and effective communication with and support of the field during the redevelopment process. Ongoing communication with the field was considered essential to the project and was achieved primarily through the use of national newsletters and a central web site dedicated to the redevelopment project. Plans to deliver training to jurisdictions were also an important component of this area of work. They involved developing and carrying out a strategy and timetable that fitted with the other components of the redevelopment project (that is, data development, data transmission and project management).

In January 2001 a portal was established on the AIHW web site for the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment project ([www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)). This site contained a public area where up-to-date and project-specific information and materials were posted. A public discussion list was also developed, enabling funded agencies, consumers and carers who were unable to participate in field testing to provide feedback or comments on the redevelopment project at any stage. A private password-protected site was also created for project management purposes and was accessible to all FIG members. This site contained all meeting papers, their agendas and minutes, key project documents, project materials and an up-to-date contact list of all FIG members and the project management team.

Also in January 2001, the first national communication (i.e. 'newsletter') was agreed and distributed to the field by all jurisdictions, ACROD and the National Caucus for Disability Consumer Organisations, as well as being placed on the AIHW web site. This newsletter outlined why the redevelopment was happening, how it was going to happen and when.

The key communication and training tasks achieved during Phase 2 (October 2000 to December 2001) included:

- The release of a further three national communication newsletters. These newsletters were distributed by all jurisdictions, as well as ACROD and the National Caucus for Disability Consumer Organisations, and informed the field on topics such as: progress of the field testing and how funded agencies could become involved; the redevelopment timetable; details about the planned April live pilot; availability of training and resources; and contact details for the FIG. The newsletters kept the field advised of the data items for possible inclusion in the CSTDA NMDS and the final data items.
- Updating the public area of the AIHW CSTDA NMDS redevelopment web site to include all national communications, draft data principles and field testing materials. The FIG area of the web site was also updated to include copies of all meeting agendas, minutes, policy documents, etc.

- Developing and agreeing on a national training strategy, which involved engaging external training contractors, through a tender process, to develop appropriate training materials and methods for the CSTDA NMDS redevelopment.

There was an increased effort in the area of communication in December 2001. A fifth national communication was released advising funded agencies and the field of the new timetable, the revised dates of implementation and the need to conduct a final snapshot collection in mid-2002. As with previous communications, this newsletter was distributed by all jurisdictions and placed on the AIHW web site. The maintenance and updating of the web site continued throughout Phase 3 of the project, although the CSTDA NMDS discussion list was shut down following the completion of Round 3 field testing.

Following a tender process, the AIHW sub-contracted Age Communications to:

- develop, trial and refine data training and 'train-the-trainer' materials to be used in the implementation of the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS;
- design, trial and refine a two-day workshop process incorporating both training for data providers or the requirements of the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS (data training) and a 'train-the-trainer' component; and
- deliver data and 'train-the-trainer' training in each jurisdiction.

The bulk of this work was carried out between March and June 2002. Age Communications completed training in each jurisdiction in June 2002, having undertaken one-day training sessions for Western Australia and the Commonwealth, and two-day training sessions for all remaining jurisdictions. A range of jurisdiction staff, trainers and funded agencies attended these sessions, together with one or more representatives from the AIHW to respond to technical queries. All jurisdictions achieved the appropriate mix and level of attendance to meet their particular needs.

Following the national training sessions, each jurisdiction delivered training to their funded agencies. Training in some jurisdictions involved a 'road show' and workshop sessions, and in others, one-on-one training. It was envisaged that by October 2002 all funded agencies would have received some form of training in the redeveloped CSTDA NMDS collection.

The AIHW continued to update the AIHW public and private redevelopment web site. For example, all key collection materials (the Data Guide, forms, Data Transmission and Technical Guide, national training materials and Data Dictionary) were placed on the public web site. The Network Guide was placed on the private web site.

It was agreed in August 2002 that national newsletters were no longer needed and jurisdictions took responsibility for further detailed communication with funded agencies.

The major communication and training milestones throughout the redevelopment project are highlighted in Table 3.1, column 5.