

# 7 Data release guidelines for the Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services NMDS

## 7.1 Purpose

This chapter outlines the process to be followed by the AIHW upon receipt of data requests for the AODTS-NMDS collections. Data from the collections 2000–01 to 2004–05 are currently available and data for 2005–06 will be available from mid 2007. This chapter is for the information of AIHW staff, IGCD AODTS-NMDS Working Group members and persons who wish to access AODTS-NMDS data.

## 7.2 Background

Jurisdictions are custodians of information collected from alcohol and other drug treatment agencies within their state or territory. The AIHW is the custodian of collated national information collected from alcohol and other drug treatment agencies and forwarded to AIHW from jurisdictions (the AODTS-NMDS collection). Custodianship for the AIHW means responsibility for protection, storage, analysis and dissemination of the data in accord with the purpose for which the data were collected, the *AIHW Act (1987)* and other relevant privacy principles.

*The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987* prescribes strict conditions to ensure the security of the data it holds and manages. It provides for strict penalties (including imprisonment) for breaches of confidentiality. In particular, the *Act* prohibits release of personal information to the police and courts.

The *Act* provides for oversight of AIHW data collections by the AIHW Ethics Committee. This committee only releases data to researchers proposing studies judged to have scientific merit and that meet the required data confidentiality standards.

Data requests can be for summarised tables or for access to unit record data held in the national database. The section on *Requests to AIHW for summarised national data* relates only to requests for summarised data, usually in table form. These data may be published data or unpublished data. The section on *Access to unit record data in the national database* relates to requests for access to unit record data held in the national database.

## 7.3 Summary of unpublished data access options

There are a number of options available for accessing the AODTS-NMDS data.

1. Request the specific table or tables of summarised data required and AIHW will produce the tables. This option can be the fastest and most efficient way of obtaining one-off requests, even if a request is complex. For national data only, no approvals are required. For data containing information on one or more of the states or territories, approval from the relevant jurisdiction/s is required (**Attachment 1 to be completed by researcher**).

2. Request access to unit record data at AIHW premises with assistance from AIHW staff to run the required tables. This requires approval from all jurisdictions (**Attachment 1 to be completed by researcher**) and from the AIHW Ethics Committee (**Attachment 2 to be completed by researcher**). Only agreed outputs can be taken off-site.
3. Request off-site access to unit record data. This requires approval from all jurisdictions (**Attachment 1 to be completed by researcher**) and from AIHW Ethics Committee (**Attachment 2 to be completed by researcher**). This is a more useful option for those planning to spend a long time doing multiple analyses.

The forms that need to be filled out for table requests at the state and/or territory level (**Attachment 1**) or for access to the unit record file (**Attachment 1** and **Attachment 2**) are available at the end of this chapter.

Data custodians within each jurisdiction will endeavour to process the data request within 2 weeks. The AIHW will then require 1–2 weeks to extract the data as specified in the request. Some data requests – for example those requiring AIHW Ethics Committee approval – will require a longer timeframe. A delivery timeframe will be established on a case by case basis. At a minimum, the AIHW will contact the researcher to acknowledge receipt of the data request.

## 7.4 Requests to AIHW for summarised national data

Summarised data requests may be for published or unpublished data.

### Published data

Published data are available for the AODTS–NMDS from the AIHW web site or in the electronic data cubes also available on the AIHW web site (<http://www.aihw.gov.au/drugs/treatment/index.cfm>). The most recent publications for the NMDS available are:

- Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia 2004–05: Report on the National Minimum Data Set
- Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia 2004–05: Findings from the National Minimum Data Set
- State and Territory data briefings from the National Minimum Data Set 2004–05.

Requests for published data will be directed to the relevant publication.

### Unpublished data

#### Release of summarised national data

Where tables of national data are requested from the AIHW, copies of requested tables produced by the AIHW are sent to all jurisdictions for information only. Approval from jurisdictions is not required for release by the AIHW of summarised national data, unless the summarised tables include the variable 'State/Territory Identifier', in which case **Attachment 1 is to be completed by researcher**.

## 7.5 Requests to AIHW for access to unit record data in the national database

Access to the AODTS–NMDS database (i.e. unit record data), or part thereof, is only provided under strict conditions according to the following protocol:

- A potential researcher must make a formal request for access to the Alcohol and Other Drug National Minimum Data Set (**Attachment 1 to be completed by researcher**).
- If the request is for access to unit records from more than one jurisdiction, the request for access form is then forwarded to all relevant jurisdictions for approval. If approved by all relevant jurisdictions, the researcher will then be required to sign the AIHW confidentiality undertaking signed by all AIHW staff.
- Every request for access to unit record data in the national database must receive AIHW Ethics' committee approval. Unit record data may contain potentially identifying information. The Ethics Committee assesses each data access request on a case by case basis to ensure that client confidentiality will not be breached by provision of the requested data. In some cases, specific conditions for access to and use of the data will be applied (**Attachment 2 to be completed by researcher**).
- The Ethics Committee meets four times a year and applications need to be submitted two weeks before a meeting. Deadlines for submissions are available from the following link: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/committees/ethics/index.cfm>.

## 7.6 AIHW charging policy for ad hoc information services

The standard AIHW charging policy will apply for ad hoc information services, except for those agencies with which AIHW has developed a specific information exchange agreement or for IGCD AODTS–NMDS Working Group members who are using the information for their own purposes. Currently, there is a minimum charge of \$200 (includes up to 30 minutes of time) plus cost recovery at \$160 per hour. The full day charge (5.5 to 7 hours) is a flat \$1,000. For more than a full day, the charge is \$1,000 per day for each full day plus a charge of \$160/hr for any remaining hours less than a full day. Any extra services, such as courier delivery or priority air freight, are charged at cost plus 20%.

If the data request requires approval from the AIHW Ethics Committee, such as for access to unit record data, then the researcher must submit a request for access to the Ethics Committee (**Attachment 2 to be completed by researcher**). The current administrative charge for this service is \$250.

## 7.7 Requests to states and territories for summarised or unit record data

In general, all requests for state and territory AODTS–NMDS data should first be sent to the relevant jurisdiction (see contact list on p.59).

### Release of summarised state and/or territory data

Requests for tables of summarised state and/or territory data should be referred to the respective jurisdiction (see contact list on p.59). The jurisdiction will either provide the client with the data or forward the request to AIHW where AIHW processes will apply; for example, **Attachment 1 to be completed by researcher** and AIHW will send this to the relevant jurisdiction/s to obtain their approval to release the data.

### Agency level data access requests

As with summarised state and/or territory data, agency level data access requests should be referred to the jurisdiction in which the agency is located. If the agency level data are to be compared with national data, a request for national data will need to be put through the AIHW.

### Cell size policy

Data dissemination must be carried out without compromising confidentiality. The practice used by the ABS and the AIHW of not releasing data of cell size 2 or less (or 3 or less if one entity comprises the bulk) will be employed for state and/or territory data.

### Release of unit record data

Requests for unit record data from one or more states and territories should be referred to the respective jurisdiction/s (see contact list on p.59). The request may be fulfilled by the jurisdiction/s, or it may be referred to the AIHW where AIHW processes will apply; for example, **Attachment 1 to be completed by researcher** and AIHW will send this to the relevant jurisdiction/s to obtain their approval to release the data. In addition, every request for access to unit record data from the national database must receive AIHW Ethic's committee approval (**Attachment 2 to be completed by researcher**).

## 7.8 Other alcohol and other drug data

If the data requested are not available from the AODTS–NMDS, they may be available from the following other sources:

- **National Opioid Pharmacotherapy Statistics Annual Data Collection**  
(AIHW) Chrysanthe Psychogios (02) 6244 1068  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- **National Drug Strategy Household Survey**  
(AIHW) Mark Cooper-Stanbury (02) 6289 7027  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

## **ATTACHMENT 1: Requests for release of AODTS–NMDS unpublished state/territory data or access to national database**

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**TO:**

**STATE AND TERRITORY ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG TREATMENT SERVICES NATIONAL MINIMUM DATA SET DATA CUSTODIANS**

### **REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF DATA**

<b>Name*</b>	<b>State/territory</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Phone No</b>
Judith Burgess	NSW	JBURG@doh.health.nsw.gov.au	(02) 9391 9220
Karen Faunt	VIC	karen.faunt@dhs.vic.gov.au	(03) 9096 5971
Karen Furlong	QLD	karen.furlong@health.qld.gov.au	(07) 3234 1291
Anne Bartu	WA	anne.bartu@health.wa.gov.au	(08) 9370 0333
Richard Cooke	SA	Cooke.Richard@saugov.sa.gov.au	(08) 8274 3385
Andrew Foskett	TAS	andrew.foskett@dhhs.tas.gov.au	(03) 6216 4266
Tracey Andrews	ACT	tracey.andrews@act.gov.au	(02) 6207 9100
Tania Karjaluo	NT	tania.karjaluo@nt.gov.au	(08) 8999 2692
Nadia Docrat	Australian Government	Nadia.Docrat@health.gov.au	(02) 6289 5109

\*These names refer to the initial contact person in each jurisdiction, not the data custodians.

**Date:**

**Reference Number: 2007-**

**Sender:** Chris Stevenson  
Functioning and Disability Unit  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare  
Contact phone: 02 6244 1189  
Contact fax: 02 6244 1069  
Email: chris.stevenson@aihw.gov.au

Please email or fax back the attached data access request response as soon as possible. If you have any queries about these data request, please contact me.

Regards,

Chris Stevenson

**REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG TREATMENT SERVICES NMDS**

**Reference number:** 2007 -

**Requestor:**

**Reason data required:**

**Proposed use/dissemination of data:**

**Data requested (table specifications):**

**Date data required:**

**Custodian response:**

Please indicate your action to the above request:

- [...] Approve release of data
- [...] Do not approve release of data
- [...] Approve release of data subject to the following conditions

**Conditions:**

**Comments:**

**Name:**

**State/territory:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Please email completed form to:** [chris.stevenson@aihw.gov.au](mailto:chris.stevenson@aihw.gov.au)

**DATA SPECIFICATIONS FOR INFORMATION REQUESTS:**

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**Job Number:** 2007 -

**State:** NSW VIC QLD WA SA TAS ACT NT Australian Government

**Data set Year:** 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05

**Additional comments:**

## **ATTACHMENT 2: Request for ethical clearance for access to AODTS–NMDS database**

### **Information sheet AIHW Ethics Committee submissions**

#### **To be read in conjunction with AIHW Ethics Committee – guidelines for the preparation of submission for ethical clearance**

All research activities with which the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is involved must be ethically acceptable. The AIHW Ethics Committee forms an opinion on the ethical acceptability of all submissions made to it. This form is designed to provide information to the Committee in order to facilitate this procedure.

In making a submission to the Committee the following points should be noted:

- The Principal Investigator, an officer with the delegation to commit the organisation to the assurances (often the supervisor of the Principal Investigator), and any subordinates that may have access to the requested data **must** sign the undertaking (Section 8) attached to the submission.
- External investigators should make their submissions to the Committee via a contact officer at the AIHW. This officer will be the custodian of the data to which access is requested.
- Clearance from the investigator's host institutional ethics committee is required prior to the AIHW Ethics Committee's assessment of the application. If the proposal is from outside the Institute or from AIHW Collaborating Units and that institution does not have an ethics committee, then this should be discussed with contact officers at the AIHW prior to submitting the application.
- The Committee requires that all projects be scientifically reviewed by a group of independent peers before it is submitted to it.
- The Principal Investigator for this project is responsible for the security and, if required, the disposal of the data received from the Institute.
- The Ethics Committee will assess the ethical acceptability of activities specified in this application. If additional follow-up activities are planned, but not to be acted upon immediately, then these activities should form the basis of another application.
- The AIHW will charge an administration fee of \$250 for each submission to the Ethics Committee.

All submissions to the Ethics Committee will be considered at their quarterly meetings. The applicant will be advised of the outcome of their submission the next working day after the meeting. An application may be considered for out of session approval if it meets the criteria determined by the Committee. If you have any queries regarding your application please discuss them with your AIHW contact officer or the Secretary of the Ethics Committee (telephone 02 6244 1000).

**EC No:**

Office use only

## AIHW Ethics Committee

### Request for opinion on ethical acceptability of project

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

GPO Box 570

Canberra ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6244 1000 Fax: (02) 6244 1299

#### 1. Project title and contact details

<b>Project Title</b>	
<b>Contact within AIHW</b>	
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	
<b>Contact Officer</b>	
<b>Telephone</b>	
<b>Fax</b>	
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Organisation</b>	
<b>Branch, Division</b>	
<b>Postal address</b>	
<b>Source of funds</b>	

#### 2. Summary of project activities

What data are requested from the AIHW?

**Please state the primary objectives of your investigation.**

**Summarise the project protocol or activities. Please specify how you will be using the data requested from the AIHW.**

**Summarise the information already available or being collected on the study population. List the source(s) of this information.**

### **3. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality**

The Privacy Act sets out eleven Information Privacy Principles (IPPs) that govern agencies of the Australian Government in their collection, management and use of data containing personal information. Copies of the IPPs and the Privacy Guidelines are available from the AIHW or the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) upon request. You can access this information via the Internet from the HREOC home page (<http://www.hreoc.gov.au>). In order that your application is assessed in accordance with the Privacy Guidelines, please address the following points.

Does your proposal breach any of the IPPs?	YES	NO
If YES which principles are involved, and what steps have you taken to address these?		
Describe how your organisation will store and maintain the confidentiality of information obtained from the Institute. This includes computer records as well as documents which would permit the identification of any individual or establishment.		
How will information obtained from the Institute be disposed of at the conclusion of the project? If information is to be retained please indicate how this will be done.		

**4. For external researchers and AIHW Collaborating Units only**

Please note that clearance of the project by an ethics committee at your institution is required. If you have not already done so, please seek clearance.

Has this project been reviewed and approved by an ethics committee at your institution?	YES	NO
If YES name of Institutional Ethics Committee and date of approval (attach copy of approval).		

If NO explain why there is no Institutional Ethics Committee approval.

**5. Assurance of scientific quality**

Has this project been reviewed by a group of independent peers?	YES	NO
If YES please provide details.		

**6. Completion date and dissemination of results**

What is the anticipated project completion date?	
How and to whom (main groups) will the results be disseminated?	
Published in peer reviewed journal, conference, presentation	
Brochure, flyer to participants, interested parties	
Internet	
Newsletter	
Other	

Please note that the AIHW must be acknowledged as the source of data in any publication, and that a copy of any published material must be supplied to the AIHW.

**7. Other individuals, groups or organisations participating in this project**

List the name and administrative relationship of each individual, group and/or organisation that will have access to the information obtained from the Institute.

## 8. The Undertaking

### Undertaking made in pursuance of Section 29 of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987

#### WHEREAS:

- (a) Subsection 29 (1) of the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987* ('the Act') provides for the disclosure of information to a person specified in writing by the Ethics Committee;
- (b) The Ethics Committee has agreed to release information to you;

NOW I, \_\_\_\_\_  
*Full name and position of Responsible Officer*

in the \_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Department or Organisation*

HEREBY UNDERTAKE that the above mentioned organisation will use the information in accordance with the following conditions.

1. The unit record file will not be matched, in whole or in part, with any other information for the purposes of attempting to identify individuals, nor will any other attempt to identify an individual be made.
2. The person/organisation will not disclose or release the information to any other person or organisation, except as statistical information that does not identify an individual.
3. Access to the unit record file will be restricted to only those employees of the organisation who are directly responsible to the Principal Investigator. The Principal Investigator will explain to any employees granted access to the information the provisions of the AIHW Act prohibiting release of the information to others.
4. Access will not be granted to any other organisation without specific approval of the AIHW Ethics Committee.
5. The information will be used for statistical purposes in health and/or welfare research.
6. The information will not be used as a basis for any legal, administrative or other actions that could directly affect any particular individuals or organisations as a result of their identification in this project.
7. The identifying information will be used only for the project proposed and described in this application. Use of any of this information in any other project will not be undertaken until a separate application form has been submitted to, and approved by, the Ethics Committee.
8. The recipient will cooperate with any surveillance procedures established by the Institute or its Ethics Committee and advised to the recipient in writing.
9. Results of the project will be made available for consideration by the Ethics Committee, if it so requests prior to any public release.
10. The Institute will be acknowledged in all reports and publications resulting from this project, and will be provided with a copy of all such reports and publications.
11. The recipient will comply in all respects with the requirements of section 29 of the AIHW Act, as attached (and of Part III of (*The Privacy Act 1988*)).
12. Copyright in all data are vested in the Australian Government and contributing states and territories. The collection is managed under contract by the AIHW.
13. Any publication which uses the data must identify the AIHW as the source.

**In providing this undertaking I understand and accept on behalf of the above mentioned organisation that subsection 29(1) of the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987* provides that a person who receives information or a document relating to another person and makes a record of, or divulges that information to any person, is guilty of an indictable offence punishable on conviction by a fine of \$2,000 or imprisonment for 12 months, or both.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*This application must be signed by a responsible officer with the authority or delegation to commit the above-mentioned organisation to the terms and conditions in section 9.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation/Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

All employees of the above organisation who will be granted access to the information must be listed and must agree to comply with the conditions included in the undertaking.

**Principal Investigator**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation/Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Details of any other person/s who will have access to the data**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach details of any other person who will have access to the data.

**Witness**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_