



CORPORATE PLAN 2003–2006

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra

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MISSION

BETTER HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR AUSTRALIANS THROUGH BETTER HEALTH AND WELFARE STATISTICS AND INFORMATION

WE INFORM COMMUNITY DISCUSSION AND DECISION-MAKING THROUGH
NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION IN DEVELOPING AND PROVIDING
HEALTH AND WELFARE STATISTICS AND INFORMATION.

FOREWORD

The 2003–06 Corporate Plan sets important new directions for the AIHW at a time when its role in describing Australia’s health and welfare systems is strongly established. We must continue what we do well, while responding to the increasingly information-driven nature of the systems themselves.

The breadth of the Institute’s statistical work is now very diverse and covers most aspects of health and welfare in Australia. We are collecting more and larger data sets on health and welfare services, conducting a growing number of surveys, and undertaking more analysis to explain and summarise information. Increasingly, we are integrating health and welfare information sources to produce innovative reports on issues of national priority. This has placed extraordinary demands on the energy and skills of all our people in Canberra and our collaborators across Australia, and their response has been magnificent.

Now there are demands for more from the Institute. Our information standards and skills are being sought to support a wider range of uses, including the direct provision of services. We need sound methodologies in many new fields. We need to have the technical and management skills, and the infrastructure, to support a diverse business.

The Plan brings together as succinctly as possible the goals of the Institute, its underlying values, and its objectives and strategies. It highlights how we approach our work, and presents the complete picture of the Institute within the Australian health and welfare system.

I want to thank all those who contributed to the Plan, and look forward to its guiding the Institute over the coming years.

Richard Madden
Director

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THE INSTITUTE AND THIS PLAN

About the Institute

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is Australia's national agency for health and welfare statistics and information. We were set up by an Act of Parliament to report to the nation on the state of its health and welfare. Thus, every two years the Institute publishes *Australia's Health* and *Australia's Welfare*, which have become key national resources of these major areas.

But they are just the most visible product of a wide range of statistical and information work done by the Institute. As an independent statutory agency, we work with many government and non-government bodies across the nation to generate reliable, regular and current facts and figures on the health and welfare of Australians.

We publish many other reports and discussion papers, drawing on a wide range of data collections. We also develop and publish standards and classifications for health and welfare statistics.

The Institute has a unique combination of features that keep us at the forefront of health and welfare statistics and information in Australia:

- Our expertise is varied and strong. We have a highly committed staff in Canberra of around 200 people and a network of collaborations across Australia with specialist groups.
- Our work aims to meet the needs of those who use it.
- We hold data on two important and related areas—health and welfare—and can therefore integrate information from these areas in ways that shed further light on the life of Australians, and how it may be improved.
- Our Act protects the confidentiality and long-term security of the data we hold. We therefore guarantee that any data provided to the Institute will be used only as the provider permits. We maintain high ethical standards.

- We bring together the major interested parties to develop and promote standardised data definitions and collection methods, new national collections, the linking of separate national collections, and key summary statistics (or indicators).
- We act openly and transparently, putting all our work in the public arena.

The constituency for our products and services includes Commonwealth, state and territory agencies; local government; non-government organisations; service providers; researchers; industry; the media; consumer organisations; the general public; and international agencies.

This Plan and its implementation

This is the Institute's 2003–2006 Corporate Plan. It was developed collaboratively by staff under the guidance of the Board.

The Plan provides some broad goals and objectives for the next three years. These will be put into operation by the Institute's Business Plan and our annual Work Programs for 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06.

The Plan will be useful for all those interested in Australia's health and welfare statistics and information, including our partners, Institute staff and existing and potential collaborators.

THE INSTITUTE'S VALUES

We uphold these values:

ACCESSIBILITY	making our work available to all Australians
EXPERTISE	applying specialised knowledge and high standards to our products and services
INDEPENDENCE	ensuring our work is objective, impartial and reflects our mission
INNOVATION	showing curiosity, creativity and resourcefulness in our work
PRIVACY	respecting and safeguarding the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of those who provide the information we use
RESPONSIVENESS	seeking and responding to the needs of all those who supply or use our data and information

OUR PEOPLE

The Institute and its Collaborating Units comprise highly skilled people who are committed to the values and work of the organisation. They are the true assets of the organisation. They provide the wide array of products and services for which the Institute is renowned. The AIHW seeks to create a stimulating environment built on trust, continuous learning, commitment to excellent performance and respect for difference.

KEY ISSUES FOR 2003–2006

Where we are now

During the life of its 1999–2002 Corporate Plan, the Institute made significant achievements in a number of important areas. We:

- ensured the policy relevance of our work, producing a growing number of high-quality and timely publications across the health and welfare spectrum, and providing statistics and information for community discussion and decision-making at all levels.
- improved the timeliness of reporting, with regular reports on key data collections published within one year of the reference period.
- made all of our major reports and products available and downloadable free of charge on our internet home page (www.aihw.gov.au). We offer personalised arrangements for individuals who have difficulty accessing conventional printed publications and web page formats.
- developed a series of multi-dimensional data cubes, which provide access to data currently held by the Institute and which can be interrogated to meet specific data needs.
- have been a key player in establishing and strengthening national information agreements and activities in health, community services and housing.
- established an international reputation for our work in developing data standards.
- reviewed and strengthened links with our Collaborating Units, and established the Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring at the Institute of Respiratory Medicine in Sydney.
- strengthened key partnerships. We renewed our Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Health and Ageing and signed similar agreements with the Department of Family and Community Services and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

- initiated cross-sectoral reporting in the areas of children and youth, and deinstitutionalisation. We also investigated the use of statistical data linkage in both the health and welfare sectors.
- participated actively in the extension of national privacy legislation to cover the private sector, and in the development of a privacy code for the health sector.
- commissioned audits of our data custodian arrangements to ensure the security of our data.
- developed and implemented a Business Plan as the strategic framework for the pursuit of business opportunities.
- ensured a sound financial position to underpin our work.
- worked with our staff to create a productive and supportive working environment to meet their professional, personal and family needs. Our 2002 Certified Agreement received a 92% approval vote from staff. The Agreement covers a three-year period, with an innovative arrangement for the third year's salary increase linked to business performance.

Moving ahead

The Institute recognises the following forces in our strategic environment:

- widespread and growing demand for health and welfare statistics and information
- the emergence of a whole-of-government approach to health and welfare policy focusing on outcomes for people
- a drive to integrate clinical, administrative and statistical uses of health information
- a varied audience and varied needs for health and welfare statistics and information
- the growing demand for summary measures and indicators to assess the performance of health and welfare systems
- opportunities to judiciously expand the scope of our activities through establishing further collaborations
- the challenges of our independent role in a complex environment of partners, clients and competitors
- the need to minimise costs on data providers, through consistency of content and definitions across data sets.

In the light of our achievements and the environment in which we operate, the Institute developed six strategic imperatives to help us meet our mission. We will:

1. Learn more about and act on our strategic environment
2. Develop and maintain relationships with those with an interest in our work
3. Flexibly refine and improve our products to reflect the needs of partners and users
4. Present our findings and their implications in a way that assists decision-making

5. Diligently manage all our resources while maximising their value
6. Deliberately address new challenges.

We will address these imperatives by focusing on:

Position

The type of organisation we aim to be and to be regarded as

Product

The qualities and characteristics of the health and welfare statistics and information that we will produce

Partners

How we will work collaboratively and strengthen strategic partnerships within the health and welfare information community

Privacy

How we will continue to emphasise the privacy, confidentiality and security of data in our custody

People

How we will work productively together as the Institute's staff

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR 2003–2006

POSITION

Objective

To be and to be seen as Australia's premier agency for health and welfare statistics and analytical commentary, and for developing standards for health and welfare information systems.

Strategies

We will:

- lead the continuing development of a high-quality national system of health and welfare statistics and information
- provide objective and authoritative health and welfare statistics and analysis which contribute to policy-making and community debate
- promote excellent health and welfare information systems through developing and implementing definitions, classifications and associated data standards
- meet the specific information requirements of the major constituencies for the Institute's work
- produce reports that integrate health and welfare information
- disseminate, market and promote the Institute and its products widely, including through the media and other distribution systems
- foster a spirit of enquiry and analysis among AIHW people, consistent with our obligations to describe and explain Australia's health and welfare.

PRODUCT

Objective

To be the key provider of:

- objective, authoritative, high quality, timely and accessible statistics and information, guided by user needs
- information infrastructure to develop and support a national system for health and welfare statistics and to contribute to broader health and welfare information developments
- innovative products that best meet the information needs of our users.

Strategies

We will

- report to the Minister and Parliament biennially on Australia's health and Australia's welfare
- prepare and disseminate other reports and analyses on the health and welfare of Australians to inform policy and planning needs, working with partners where appropriate
- ensure that our annual work programs reflect agreed national health and welfare priorities
- report national performance indicators wherever appropriate
- develop and compile national health and welfare data collections, and release data to third parties for research and statistical purposes under the guidance of the Institute's Ethics Committee and in compliance with the Institute's Act
- develop, promote and use national and international health and welfare information infrastructure, including national agreements, definitions, classifications and models
- undertake consultancies and provide services whenever possible, provided that they are compatible with the Institute's values and work program
- undertake health and welfare surveys, in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to provide information to inform important policy issues
- prepare our products with impartiality, accuracy and timeliness
- develop and apply appropriate statistical and other methods
- ensure that the Institute's products are guided by expert advice, including from data providers and external collaborators
- integrate health and welfare information sources to produce innovative reports on issues of national priority
- seek and critically review user feedback on the content, timeliness and usefulness of our products

- present our information in a style that is as easily understood and interesting as possible
- use a mix of printed and electronic formats that enhance the accessibility and usefulness of our products for the full range of users
- provide all internet publications without charge, and charge realistic prices for other products and services.

PARTNERS

Objective

To strengthen and build partnerships and provide leadership to achieve best results.

Strategies

We will:

- continue to take a leading role in coordinating and developing national health and welfare information, and in building teamwork and motivation among key players
- continue to promote and strengthen the role of the Institute as an ‘honest broker’ for statistics and information among all parties in the health and community services sectors, including government and non-government agencies and private sector providers
- provide high-quality support for and participate in the processes of the National Health Information Agreement, the National Community Services Information Agreement, the National Housing Data Agreement and the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information
- further strengthen working arrangements and agreements with Commonwealth, state and territory health and welfare agencies, the Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council, the Community Services Ministers’ Advisory Council and the Housing Ministers’ Advisory Council; and ensure that the Institute’s annual work program reflects jointly developed priorities.
- strengthen collaborative arrangements with staff at all levels of the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Family and Community Services and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs to maximise the benefits to these departments and to the Institute
- work interactively within the Health and Ageing portfolio to build high-quality information products
- be alert to opportunities to enter into collaborative arrangements to broaden the scope of the Institute’s work
- continue links with the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and with bodies that have charters similar to that of the Institute in countries in the Asia-Pacific region and in other OECD countries

- consolidate the Institute’s role as a provider of statistics and information to the Report on Government Services, produced by the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
- continue to value and respect the essential role of the Institute’s data providers—individuals and organisations
- work with data providers to enhance the quality, format and timeliness of data provided by:
 - minimising the reporting load by good design of data collections to ensure consistency of content and definitions across data sets
 - avoiding duplication of data collection activities
 - giving and receiving feedback on data collection and quality issues
- encourage timely input from Commonwealth, state and territory providers by publishing the output from data collections according to established timetables; if necessary, publish output without full national coverage if a jurisdiction fails to provide timely data
- work with data providers to ensure that any conditions placed on use of data are consistent with the Institute’s values.

PRIVACY

Objective

To continue to emphasise the privacy, confidentiality and security of data in our custody.

Strategies

We will:

- provide leadership and advice to partners and providers about the privacy framework within which we operate
- ensure our data are held securely and safely
- respect and communicate the role of the Institute’s Act and its Ethics Committee in protecting data confidentiality and the privacy of persons and entities about whom/which data are held
- enhance and communicate the data custodian arrangements at the Institute, to assure providers that data holdings are secure and that data security procedures incorporate their requirements
- ensure that we continue to adhere to the Institute’s Privacy Policy.

PEOPLE

Objective

To have excellent staff, committed to the Institute's Mission and Values, and to the Australian Public Service Values.

Strategies

We will:

- provide rewarding and challenging work and, as far as possible, secure employment for those in the Institute and its Collaborating Units
- continue to build teamwork at all levels, within and between Divisions and Collaborating Units
- strive to continually improve ways of performing our work, including performance feedback between and for all staff
- provide supportive and flexible working conditions
- seek to specially acknowledge the contributions of individual staff members
- foster creativity and curiosity
- provide learning and development opportunities to enhance expertise
- continue our commitment to diversity, occupational health and safety, and participative management principles and practices.