

# Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Enabling legislation	The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) is established and operates under the provisions of the <i>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987</i> . The Institute is in the Health and Aged Care portfolio and has a close relationship with the Family and Community Services portfolio.
Responsible Minister	From 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 the Minister responsible for the Institute was the Hon. Dr Michael Wooldridge, Minister for Health and Aged Care. The Institute also communicated with the Minister for Family and Community Services, the Hon. Jocelyn Newman, and the Minister for Aged Care, the Hon. Bronwyn Bishop, on its activities in their areas of responsibility.
Objectives and functions	The AIHW's main functions relate to the collection and production of health-related and welfare-related information and statistics, and are specified in s. 5 of the AIHW Act. In summary, the AIHW: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identifies and meets the information needs of governments and the community to enable them to make informed decisions to improve the health and welfare of Australians;</li><li>• provides authoritative and timely information and analysis to the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and non-government clients through the collection, analysis and dissemination of national health, housing assistance and community services data; and</li><li>• develops, maintains and promotes, in conjunction with stakeholders, information standards for health, housing assistance and community services.</li></ul> The Institute may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• enter into contracts or arrangements, including contracts or arrangements to perform functions on behalf of the Institute (details of such collaborations are included later in this report); and</li><li>• subject to strict confidentiality provisions contained in the AIHW Act, release data to other bodies or persons for research purposes.</li></ul> The Institute publishes and promotes the results of its work.
Legislation	The Institute was established as a statutory authority in 1987 by the then <i>Australian Institute of Health Act 1987</i> . In 1992 the Institute's role and functions were expanded to include welfare-related information and statistics. The Act is now entitled the <i>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987</i> (Appendix 2, page 83).

## Corporate governance

### AIHW Board

Section 8(1) of the AIHW Act specifies the composition of the Board of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Board members, other than three ex-officio members and a staff representative, are appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Minister for Health and Aged Care for periods not exceeding 3 years. Details of 1999–00 Board members are listed below. The Financial Statements contain details of remuneration of Board members (Note 12, page 77), and Related Party Disclosures of the Board (Note 13, page 78).

Board members for the period 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000 were:

*Chair*

Professor Janice Reid, AM

*Ministerial nominee*

Dr Sandra Hacker

*Secretary, Department of Health and Aged Care*

Mr Andrew Podger

*Australian Statistician*

Represented by Mr Tim Skinner, Deputy Australian Statistician

*Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council nominee*

Mr David Butt

*Community Services Ministers' Advisory Council*

Mr Ian Procter

*Representative of State and Territory Housing Departments*

Ms Linda Apelt

*Representative of consumers of welfare services*

Ms Elizabeth Davies

*Director, AIHW*

Dr Richard Madden

*AIHW staff nominee*

Ms Lyn Elliott

The Secretary of the Department of Family and Community Services, Dr David Rosalky, is invited to attend and participate in Board meetings. His representative until June 2000 was Mr David Tune. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Institute have reciprocal arrangements to observe Institute Board and NHMRC meetings respectively.

Four Board meetings were held during the period. Details of meetings attended and Board members' qualifications and experience are in Appendix 3 (page 108).



AIHW Board: (top row) Ms Linda Appelt, Dr Sandra Hacker, Mr David Tune (for Dr David Rosalky), Ms Lyn Elliott, Mr Andrew Podger, Ms Elizabeth Davies; (bottom row) Dr Richard Madden, Prof Janice Reid (Chair), Mr Tim Skinner. Absent: Mr Ian Procter

## Board committees

### Ethics Committees

The functions and the composition of the Institute's Health Ethics Committee are prescribed in s. 16(1) of the *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987*, and Regulations accompanying the Act. The Committee's principal responsibilities are to form an opinion as to the acceptability or otherwise, on ethical grounds, of current or proposed health-related activities of the Institute or bodies with which the Institute is associated, and to inform the Institute of the Committee's opinion. The Institute can release identifiable health data for research purposes with the agreement of the Committee, provided that release does not contravene the terms and conditions under which the data were supplied to the Institute.

The Institute has established a Welfare Ethics Committee to cover its welfare activities. Under its Act, the Institute cannot release identifiable welfare information. The membership of this Committee is identical to that of the Health Ethics Committee.

The Commonwealth Government has approved amendments to the Institute's Act to expand the Health Ethics Committee's functions to include welfare information. The necessary amendments are expected to be introduced into Parliament during 2000–01.

### **Membership and meetings**

Membership of the Ethics Committees at 30 June 2000 is shown below. The Ethics Committees meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council requirements for the composition of Human Research Ethics Committees.

Four meetings of both the Health Ethics Committee and the Welfare Ethics Committee were held during 1999–00. The Committees agreed to the ethical acceptability of 24 projects during the year.

### **Ethics Committees members**

The Health Ethics Committee and Welfare Ethics Committee share common membership:

*Medical graduate with research experience*

Dr Sid Sax (Chair)

*Graduate in a social science*

Dr Helen Christensen (1 July 1999 – 1 March 2000)

Dr Siew-ean Khoo (from 2 March 2000)

*Nominee of the Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages*

Mr John Jameson (1 July 1999 – 14 February 2000)

Mr Andrew Levens (from 15 February 2000)

*Minister of religion*

Rev. Dr D'Arcy Wood

*Legal practitioner*

Mr Robert Todd

*Representatives of general community attitudes*

Mr Ken Moran (1 July 1999 – 6 August 1999)

Mr Stan Alchin (from 7 August 1999)

Ms Sophie Hill

*Director, AIHW*

Dr Richard Madden

### **Audit and Finance Committee**

New members were appointed to the Audit and Finance Committee during the year. Its membership and details of the four meetings held during the year are shown in Appendix 9.

The Committee considered the following matters and made recommendations to the Institute's Board:

- review of annual financial statements and consideration of audit reports
- annual report by the external auditor on the financial statement
- engagement of an internal auditor for the period commencing 1 July 2000
- 3-year Audit Strategic Plan
- data risk audit

## Indemnities for officers

The AIHW provided appropriate indemnity for officers during the financial year.

## Funding

Two main sources of income fund the Institute's activities. As part of the Health and Aged Care portfolio, the Institute was appropriated \$8,111,000 in 1999–00 from the Commonwealth (Appendix 1, page 61). Revenue for externally funded projects from other sources was \$9,066,000. External projects are largely funded through agreements between the Institute and Commonwealth (the Department of Health and Aged Care and the Department of Family and Community Services) and State agencies.

## Structure, management and staff

### Organisational structure

The Director, who is a member of the Board, is responsible for the AIHW's activities. The Director is supported in this role by three Division Heads, each with a major functional responsibility within the organisation's Canberra headquarters. The chart on page 8 shows the Institute's organisational structure.

### Divisions

The AIHW has three divisions: Health, Welfare, and Economics and Business Services. The Director is supported by an Executive Unit.

### Collaborating units

Five collaborating units (contracted with the organisations shown below) assist the AIHW in performing its functions:

#### National Perinatal Statistics Unit (University of New South Wales)

The National Perinatal Statistics Unit aims to contribute to the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies in Australia through the collection, analysis and reporting of national reproductive and perinatal health information. The Unit collaborates with State and Territory perinatal data groups and other professional and consumer groups in developing national reproductive and perinatal health statistics and information systems.

#### Dental Statistics and Research Unit (University of Adelaide)

The Dental Statistics and Research Unit aims to improve oral health of Australians through the collection, analysis and reporting of the oral health and access to dental care of Australians, the practice of dentistry in Australia and the availability of an appropriate dental labour force.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Welfare Information Unit (National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Darwin)**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Welfare Information Unit carries out the collection and analysis of health and welfare information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. With the assistance of the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, the arrangements with the Australian Bureau of Statistics allow a unified focus on the important areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and welfare information.

**National Injury Surveillance Unit (Flinders University)**

The National Injury Surveillance Unit operates as part of the Research Centre for Injury Studies at the Flinders University of South Australia. The Unit undertakes public health surveillance of injury at the national level to support injury prevention and control.

**General Practice Statistics and Classification Unit (University of Sydney)**

The General Practice Statistics and Classification Unit operates within the University of Sydney's Family Medicine Research Centre. It conducts a continuous national survey of general practice activity and maintains and develops the classifications needed for this purpose.

**Cooperative arrangements**

The Institute's Board encourages judicious collaboration with suitable organisations to enhance the Institute's ability to meet its mission. The Institute has such arrangements with the National Centre for Classification in Health and the National Key Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems. These arrangements are briefly outlined below.

**National Centre for Classification in Health (NCCH)**

The Institute contributes, in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, to the funding of the NCCH's work on mortality classification.

**National Key Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems**

An agreement was signed in August 1999 with the University of Adelaide to establish a collaboration with the National Key Centre for Social Applications of Geographic Information Systems. The purpose of the collaboration is to enable the presentation and dissemination of health and welfare information to be prepared on a Geographical Information System (GIS) platform.

## AIHW staff

AIHW staff are employed under the *Public Service Act 1922*. Details of staffing during 1999–00 are shown on page 53. Executive staff as at 30 June 2000 are listed below. Information on Unit Heads is in Appendix 6 (page 125).



### *Director*

Richard Madden, BSc Syd, PhD Princeton, FIA, FIAA

### *Health Division Head*

Geoff Sims, BCom (Stats) (Hons) UNSW

### *Welfare Division Head*

Ching Y Choi, BA ICU, PhD ANU

### *Economics and Business Services Division Head*

Anny Stuer, BA (Hons) France, PhD ANU

## Risk management strategies

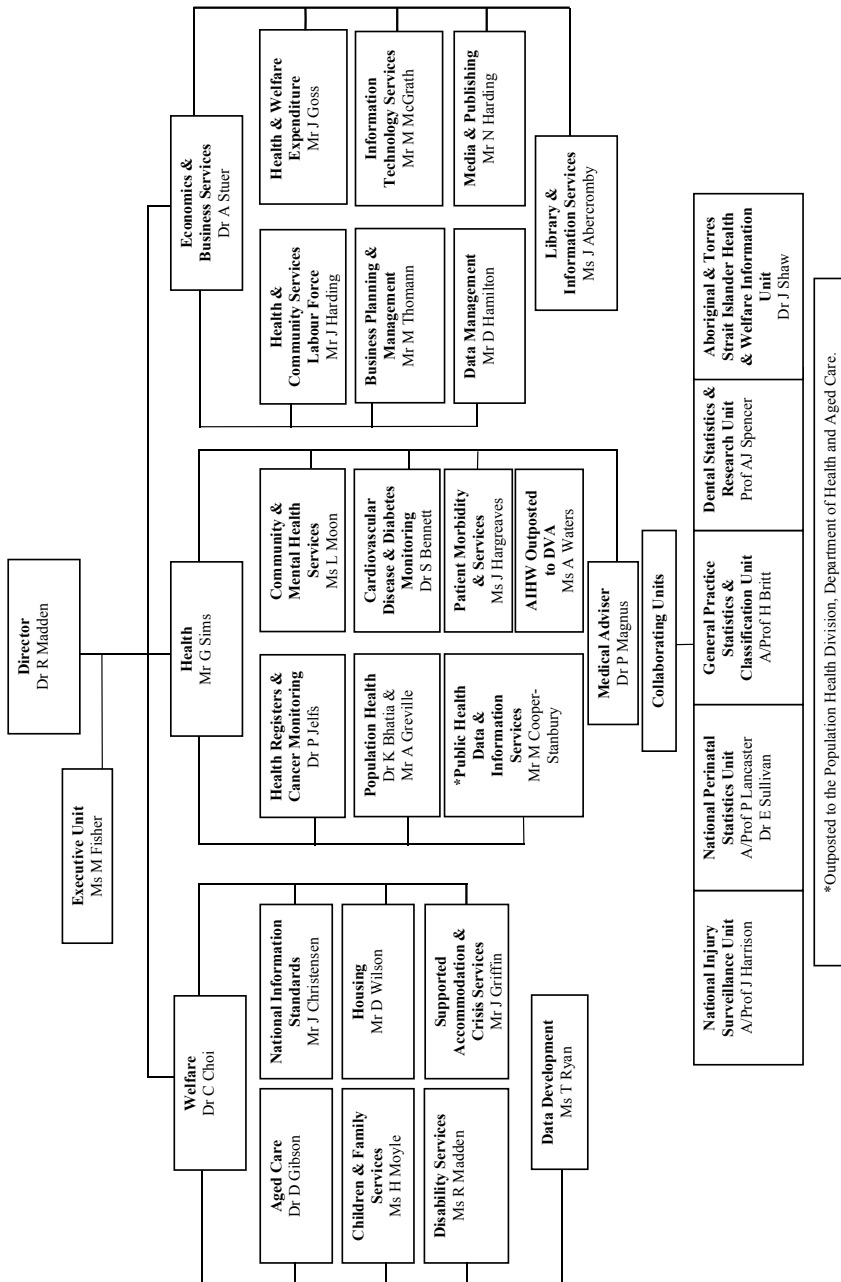
Contingency plans developed during the previous reporting period to ensure Y2K compliance have formed the basis of the development of a risk management plan at the Institute. A review of risk management policies and procedures adopted by the Institute was undertaken by the internal auditors during the year and relevant staff attended Comcover insurance risk management modules.

## Year 2000

The transition of all computer-based or -controlled systems to the year 2000 was achieved successfully and without incident, and all have been operating satisfactorily since then.

## Computer virus detection

All incoming files continue to be scanned for computer viruses, and virus detection software is being kept up to date. Virus attacks increased during 1999-00, and the period of time between notification of a new virus and its detection for the first time at the Institute appears to be shortening. Despite this reduced warning time, counter measures continue to be effective.





# Highlights

The Institute continued to lead the development of national information in health, housing assistance and community services in Australia in 1999–00.

It was a very productive year, with a record 77 publications being produced, together with 42 public releases and special events/launches – also a record.

Both of the Institute's biennial reports to Parliament – *Australia's Welfare 1999* and *Australia's Health 2000* – were published during the year, and launched, respectively, by the Minister for Family and Community Services and the Minister for Health and Aged Care. Conferences were held in conjunction with both launches.

The positive response to various AIHW thematic reports in 1998–99 continued in 1999–00 with the publication of *Australia's Young People: Their Health and Wellbeing 1999*. This report included information bridging traditional notions of health and welfare services, an area the AIHW is devoting increasing attention to. During the year, planning sessions were held for a future report on 'de-institutionalisation' (the shift to community care and living).

This 1999–00 Annual Report shows a widening range and extent of work being undertaken by the Institute compared with the previous year. The increased demand for AIHW expertise is pleasing. Staff numbers have grown to over 180 to fulfil contractual obligations with various client groups.

It is not possible to meet demand for additional development work through the Institute's appropriation. Consequently, extra resources must be attracted through partnerships and other business arrangements with various funding agencies (details of which may be found in Appendix 4). The Institute has been meticulous in ensuring that all such arrangements accord with its mission and values, its enabling legislation and its business rules.

Business development has thus become an increasingly important feature of the Institute's relationships with its stakeholders. The AIHW appreciates the support and cooperation given by all agencies with which it works.

A welcome development in this regard was the establishment during the year of a formal partnership among several agencies for the AIHW to develop housing assistance data. The arrangements perhaps provide a model for future data development in other areas.

Some specific highlights of 1999–00 include:

**Release of  
Australia's Welfare  
1999**

*Australia's Welfare: Services and Assistance 1999*, the fourth biennial report to government on community services, was published as scheduled in November 1999. The Minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Jocelyn Newman, launched the report at the Australia's Welfare 1999 Conference, organised by the Institute.

The report covers welfare services expenditure, family and children's services including child protection, services for homeless people, housing assistance, disability services and aged care. A special feature chapter, written by Professor Peter Saunders of the University of New South Wales, examines the interactions between changing work patterns and the community services workforce over the past 20 years.

The 1-day conference held to coincide with the launch of the report was very well attended, and feedback from participants was excellent. Keynote speakers were New South Wales Community Services Commissioner Mr Robert Fitzgerald, and Professor Peter Saunders.

*Australia's Welfare* authors presented sessions on their areas of expertise, and the conference concluded with a panel discussion, 'Welfare services: a new partnership between government, the community and business'.

**Release of  
Australia's Health  
2000**

*Australia's Health 2000*, the seventh biennial health report, was published in June 2000. Because of his Parliamentary responsibilities, it was 'virtually' launched by the Minister for Health and Aged Care, Dr Michael Wooldridge, via a video link from Parliament House to the launch venue at the Australian National University. The launch was held as part of the Australia's Health 2000 Conference organised by the Institute.

The report was considerably restructured compared with previous reports in the series. The first chapter includes a conceptual framework for health that provides the foundations for the remainder of the report. Other chapters include comprehensive information on: the health of Australians and population groups; the determinants of health; health resources and use of services; health strategies, performance and monitoring; and challenges for national health information. The report also contains a feature chapter presenting changes in Australia's disease profile over the last 100 years.

As with the Australia's Welfare 1999 Conference, the 1-day Australia's Health 2000 Conference attracted positive feedback. Keynote speakers were AIHW Board Chair Professor Janice Reid, and Professor Peter Baume from the University of New South Wales.

## General practice statistics

The AIHW General Practice Statistics and Classification Unit's first annual report, *General Practice Activity in Australia 1998-99*, was released in October 1999.

The report details approximately 100,000 doctor-patient encounters from a sample of 1,000 GPs. It gives an insight into why people visit their GP, the health problems GPs manage, and what types of treatments general practice patients receive.

The report is an output of the BEACH (Bettering the Evaluation And Care of Health) program conducted by the University of Sydney in collaboration with the AIHW.

A second report, *Measures of Health and Health Care Delivery in General Practice in Australia*, released in May 2000, presents the results of 17 sub-studies conducted in the first year of BEACH, including measures of GP patient population health, consultation length, and GP satisfaction with consultations.

## Burden of disease and injury in Australia

The Institute published the first national Burden of Disease and Injury Study for Australia in November 1999.

This pioneering study allows measurement of the health burden to the nation arising from 176 diseases, injuries and risk factors, using a common metric, the disability adjusted life year or DALY.

The work was undertaken in association with the Victorian Department of Human Services, building on work undertaken by the World Health Organization, but with method modifications for the Australian context.

The study provides a new way of measuring population health to assist in decision making in health.

One of the more important findings was the extent of the burden of mental illness, particularly depression, in the community.

## *Australia's Young People: Their Health and Wellbeing 1999*

The first national report on the health status of young Australians (12-24 years) was released in January 2000. Development of the report and its content was guided by an expert advisory group working with AIHW staff.

The report provides comprehensive information on important diseases and injuries among Australian youth, major risk factors and social determinants of health.

The publication was widely reviewed and positively received by a broad cross-section of interested parties, from health planners and administrators to academics, researchers and community groups.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and welfare information

The Institute's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Welfare Information Unit (ATSIHWIU), located in the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Darwin, produced the second edition of its flagship publication, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*.

The report was released in August 1999 and received widespread media attention. Information sessions were conducted nationwide by ATSIHWIU staff.

By February 2000 the publication had sold out and had to be reprinted to satisfy demand.

A companion summary booklet was released in October 1999.

## Housing assistance data development

During 1999–00, efforts to develop nationally consistent housing assistance data received a boost through the signing of two data agreements—the National Housing Data Agreement (a subsidiary agreement of the 1999–2003 Commonwealth–State Housing Agreement), and the Agreement on National Indigenous Housing Information. The Institute is recognised as a partner in these agreements.

AIHW work in drafting the agreements and providing secretariat support through the development stages was greatly assisted by strong support from all jurisdictions and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Data management groups and data committees have now been established under the agreements, and work is under way. The AIHW contributes funds to support projects identified as priorities by the management groups.

## Business arrangements with the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Services

The AIHW contributes strongly to the *Report on Government Services* produced annually by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Services. The Institute participates in the six working parties covering health, housing and community services, and provides numerous key data sets to the Steering Committee's secretariat.

The volume of this work increased significantly over the past 2–3 years to the point where the resourcing implications had become a serious concern—the AIHW had not been resourced for this work. As well, the Institute had been concerned at specific uses of, and alterations to, Institute information in successive editions of the report.

Consequently, during 1999–00 the AIHW and the Steering Committee agreed to a set of formal business arrangements to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the parties and to overcome the resourcing concerns. The AIHW Board has endorsed the business arrangements.

## AIHW cultural and social activities

Against the background of significant achievements and record output outlined above, AIHW cultural and social activities have also flourished.

The AIHW choir won a Christmas workplace choir competition run by a local radio station. It also performed with distinction at various concerts, social events and competitions, and as part of a massed Australian Public Service choir.

The AIHW's commitment to '...improve the health and wellbeing of Australians...' was reflected in the active nature of its Melbourne Cup celebrations. In addition to the usual

celebrations, walking, running, and bicycle races were held, with a high level of staff participation in each event.

The Institute's birthday was again celebrated by a soccer match between as many staff members as chose to play. The Institute also fielded a team in the Heart Foundation's Swim for Heart fundraising event in July 1999.

The Institute is proud to have its own Olympic torchbearer, John Harding, Head of the Health and Community Services Labour Force Unit. John was selected to run in the torch relay because of his long involvement as a competitor, coach and administrator in Australian Capital Territory distance running.

## **AIHW staff**

AIHW staff worked extremely hard during the year, while suffering increasing accommodation pressure as staff numbers grew at a greater rate than the space available. The accommodation problems will be relieved with an additional wing of the Fern Hill Park premises becoming available in July 2000. The AIHW will then occupy the whole building.

The volume, quality and timeliness of information produced by the AIHW during the year are testimony to the skill and commitment of its staff.