

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

CORPORATE PLAN 1999—2002



AIHW
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE
OF HEALTH & WELFARE

OUR MISSION

To improve the health and well-being of Australians, we inform community discussion and decision making through national leadership in developing and providing health and welfare statistics and information.

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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* as comprehensive summaries of these two major areas that encompass health, health services, community services and housing.

These two regular reports of the Institute have become key national resources. But they are just the most visible main product of a wide range of statistical and information work done by the Institute. As an independent 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, based on a highly committed staff in Canberra and a network of collaborations across Australia with specialist groups.
- Our work is 'applied', to meet the needs of those who use it.
- Because it holds data on two important and related areas — health and welfare — the Institute is in a position to integrate information from these areas in ways that shed further light on the life of Australians and how it may be improved.
- The Institute's Act protects the confidentiality and long-term security of the data we hold. We can thus obtain data collected by Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies and a wide variety of other official and scientific sources and combine those data to form an invaluable national information resource.
- 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).

Our products and services are used by Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies, local government, non-government organisations, service providers, researchers, industry, the media, consumer organisations, the general public, and international agencies such as the World Health Organization and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

We are funded in roughly equal proportions by government appropriation and contracted work. Irrespective of the source of funds, we apply objectivity and high standards to all our work and place it in the public domain.

This Plan

This is the Institute's 1999–2002 Corporate Plan. It was developed collaboratively by staff under the guidance of the Institute's Board. The Plan

- describes the Institute and its mission, values, key opportunities and challenges
- sets out the Institute's chief directions and objectives to 2002
- acts as a guide for Institute staff
- sets standards for measuring our progress
- shows openness, accountability and good corporate practice.

The Institute's annual Work Programs for 1999–2000, 2000–2001 and 2001–2002 will put into operation the Plan's goals and objectives.

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

Definitions

For the purposes of this Plan, 'health and welfare' mean the following areas and their inter-relationships:

- health
- health services
- welfare services, including
 - aged care services
 - child care services
 - services for people with disabilities
 - housing assistance
 - child welfare services
 - other community services.

THE INSTITUTE'S VALUES

We follow these values:

- Objectivity** – being objective, impartial and open in our methods, analysis and presentation.
- Independence** – ensuring that our work always accords with our mission.
- Quality** – following high statistical and ethical standards in all our work.
- Respect**
 - ensuring the confidentiality of information provided to us.
 - respecting the privacy and sensitivity of individuals and groups.
 - recognising the efforts and expertise of our partners and data providers.
- Accessibility** – making our work accessible to all Australians in a timely manner.
- Client focus** – learning the varied needs and views of our clients, to ensure the relevance of our work.
- People** – respecting and promoting the creativity, expertise and wellbeing of those we work with.

KEY ISSUES FOR 1999–2002

Achievements

During the life of the last Corporate Plan, the Institute made significant achievements in a number of important areas. We

- strengthened the policy relevance of our work, producing an increased number of high quality and timely publications across the health and welfare spectrum, providing statistics and information for community discussion and decision making at all levels
- made our products more accessible by creating our Internet Home Page, where all our major reports and products can be viewed and downloaded
- were a key player in establishing and strengthening national information agreements and activities. The National Community Services Information Agreement was signed and the National Health Information Agreement was renewed. Information plans were developed and adopted in the areas of community services, public health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The first edition of the *National Community Services Data Dictionary* and three versions of the *National Health Data Dictionary* were published
- brought up to date our major data collection and reporting activities and now publish annual collections in a timely manner according to new standards. Notable among these are the annual hospital statistics publications
- welcomed the General Practice Statistics and Classification Unit to an expanded and consolidated network of collaborating units and other collaborative relationships
- strengthened key partnerships, including entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Health and Aged Care and a major contract with the Department of Family and Community Services (on behalf of a Commonwealth/State committee) to be the National Data Collection Agency for the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program
- worked together to create a productive and supportive working environment, reflected in our Certified Agreement, to meet the professional, personal and family needs of our staff
- developed business principles for the Institute and specific new privacy guidelines for our collection and data holdings, to link the way we operate with our mission and values.

Moving ahead

The Institute recognises these factors in our strategic climate:

- widespread and growing thirst for health and welfare statistics and information
- demand for increasingly sophisticated and integrated data analyses
- growing community recognition that high-quality information can be used directly to improve service delivery and program management
- varied audience for health and welfare statistics and information that expects a strong client focus
- 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
- competitive, commercially-oriented climate
- expanding information technology options.

In the light of our achievements and the strategic climate, the Institute has three general aims for 1999–2002 to help us meet our vision, as the leader in health and welfare statistics and information. We will

- build on our achievements and special strengths
- stay at the forefront of issues and opportunities
- enhance our capacity for productivity and high-quality work.

These general aims are reflected in the next section of this Plan, through five main objectives relating to the Institute's work. For each objective we have developed a series of strategies to apply over the next three years. The objectives describe

- the type of organisation we aim to be and to be regarded as (our Position)
- the qualities of the health and welfare statistics and information that we will produce (Product)
- how we will work collaboratively and strengthen strategic partnerships within the health and welfare information community (Partners)
- how we will enhance our relationships with those who supply us with data (Providers)
- how we will work productively together as the Institute's staff (People).

OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGIES FOR 1999–2002

POSITION

Objective

To be and to be regarded as Australia's premier agency for health and welfare statistics and analytical commentary.

Strategy

By attracting and retaining excellent staff and by working with partners and providers, we will produce definitive reports on Australia's health and Australia's welfare and other high-quality work that confirm us as

- the leading provider of objective health and welfare statistics and analysis that contribute to policy making and community debate
- the lead agency in developing a high quality national system of health and welfare statistics and information
- a key agency in developing excellent health information systems through developing and implementing definitions, classifications and associated data standards
- an organisation that adds value to our work by producing reports that integrate health and welfare information
- an authoritative provider of objective health and welfare statistical services for clients
- a helpful, client-focused organisation.

Business strategies and principles

We will manage the Institute as an organisation that

- seeks to ensure excellence in health and welfare statistics and information used for policy- and decision-making purposes and community discussion
- is aware of policy trends and is responsive to stakeholders' perceptions and needs
- has ethical business principles consistent with its mission
- works continually to enhance its productivity and cost efficiency
- is national, multi-site and embraces a range of professional expertise
- establishes strategic business relationships

- regularly and cooperatively evaluates these business relationships to ensure continuing mutual benefits
- operates under principles of sound financial management, with responsible and transparent pricing policies
- makes judicious and creative use of technology to enhance its efficiency and the usefulness and accessibility of its products
- critically reviews its products and their reception.

Communication strategies

We will

- continue to inform the community, our partners and clients through a comprehensive publication and information dissemination program, and by making strategic use of the media, Internet, conferences and launches
- place increased emphasis on promoting the Institute, its products and its corporate capabilities
- communicate our mission, values, role, capabilities and work programs to clients.

PRODUCT

Objective

To provide

- 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 information developments
- objective health and welfare statistical services for clients.

Strategies

Key products

We will

- report biennially to the Minister and Parliament on Australia's health and Australia's welfare
- ensure that our annual work programs reflect agreed national health and welfare priorities
- prepare and disseminate other reports and analyses on the health and welfare of Australians to inform policy and planning needs
- 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 Committees 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.

Quality

We will

- prepare our products with impartiality, accuracy and timeliness, at high statistical standards
- ensure that the Institute's products are guided by expert advice, including from data providers and external collaborators
- add value to products by complementing descriptive statistics with further analysis and relevant interpretation
- develop innovative products on issues of national priority, integrating health and welfare information sources
- seek and critically review user feedback on the content, timeliness and usefulness of our products.

Accessibility and dissemination

We will

- 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 to the full range of users
- disseminate and market our products widely and in a timely manner, including through the media and external distribution systems
- provide as many products as feasible without charge, but otherwise charge realistic prices.

PARTNERS

Objective

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

Strategies

Leadership

We will

- continue to take a leading role in coordinating and developing national health and welfare information, building teamwork and motivation among key players
- promote and strengthen the role of the Institute as an 'honest broker' for statistics and information among all the parties in the health and community services sectors
- provide high-quality support for and participate in the processes of the National Health Information Agreement, the National Community Services Information Agreement and Commonwealth–State housing arrangements.

Working collaboratively

We will

- further strengthen working arrangements and agreements with Commonwealth, State and Territory health and welfare agencies, the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council and the Standing Committee of Community Services and Income Security Administrators; and ensure that the Institute's annual work programs reflect jointly developed priorities.
- strengthen collaborative arrangements with staff at all levels of the Department of Health and Aged Care and the Department of Family and Community Services, to maximise the benefits to the Departments and to the Institute
- work interactively within the Health and Aged Care portfolio to build high-quality information products
- formalise and strengthen collaborative arrangements with the Health Insurance Commission and the National Health and Medical Research Council
- continue to work collaboratively with the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- continue to work with State and Territory health and welfare agencies for the timely delivery of accurate and useful information products
- collaborate with other organisations where this will meet important information needs efficiently and build on a basis of expertise in the relevant field
- continue links with the World Health Organization and the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) and develop similar links with bodies that have charters similar to the Institute's in countries in the Asia-Pacific region and in other OECD countries.

Communication

We will

- develop consultative links with housing administrators
- build cooperative links with relevant non-government organisations, private service providers and industry
- consolidate the Institute's role as a provider of statistics and information to the Commonwealth Grants Commission and the Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
- encourage an 'internal client' commitment, recognising that the Institute's functional units support and depend on each other.

PROVIDERS

Objective

To enhance the strength and mutually beneficial nature of relationships with our data providers.

Strategies

Data providers

We will

- continue to value and respect the important role of the Institute’s data providers—individuals and organisations
- enhance our relationships with data providers by regularly consulting with them at all levels on data provision and use
- 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 and requests for data, and innovative collection methods
 - avoiding duplication of data collection activities
 - giving and receiving feedback on data collection and quality issues
- incorporate data provider views, as experts and information users, in the development of our products
- respect timely input from Commonwealth, State and Territory providers by publishing the output from data collections according to established timetables; if necessary, output will be published 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.

Data protection

We will

- respect and communicate the role of the Institute’s Act, and Ethics Committees, in protecting data confidentiality and the privacy of people and entities about whom 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
- implement the Institute’s 1998 Privacy Policy.

PEOPLE

Objective

To respect and promote the creativity, expertise and wellbeing of those we work with

Strategies

Working arrangements

We will

- provide interesting, rewarding and challenging work and, as far as possible, secure employment for those in the Institute and its Collaborating Units
- ensure that we consult adequately in matters that affect us and others we work with
- 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
- ensure that work demands are realistic
- seek to specially acknowledge the contributions of individual staff members.

Staffing

We will

- employ excellent staff
- seek the best balance of technical and management expertise
- continue our commitment to diversity, occupational health and safety, and participative management principles and practices
- uphold the values of the Australian Public Service (the APS Values).

Staff development

We will

- provide learning and development opportunities that continue to build expertise to meet the varying needs of both the Institute and its staff
- support staff who are undertaking further studies, including for higher degrees.