



Australian Government

Australian Institute of  
Health and Welfare



Accessing data



**AIHW**

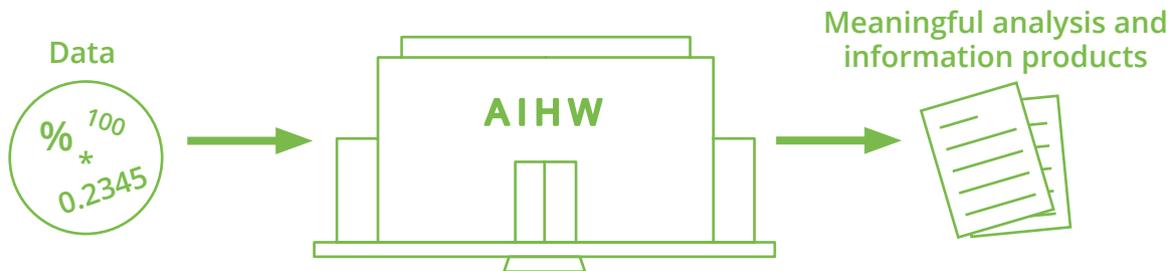
Stronger evidence,  
better decisions,  
improved health and welfare

# What we do

The AIHW is an independent Australian government agency with more than 30 years of experience working with health and welfare data.

Our role is to:

- collect and manage data on health and welfare issues, including from state, territory and federal government agencies
- analyse and turn data into useful information and reports to support better policy and service delivery decisions
- make data available to state, territory and federal government agencies, universities, research centres, and non-government organisations.



# Our data holdings

Our health and welfare data holdings are substantial, including more than 150 datasets.



These essential statistical assets cover fields as diverse as housing assistance, homelessness, perinatal health, disability, cancer, hospitals and hospital activity, alcohol and other drugs, and mortality.

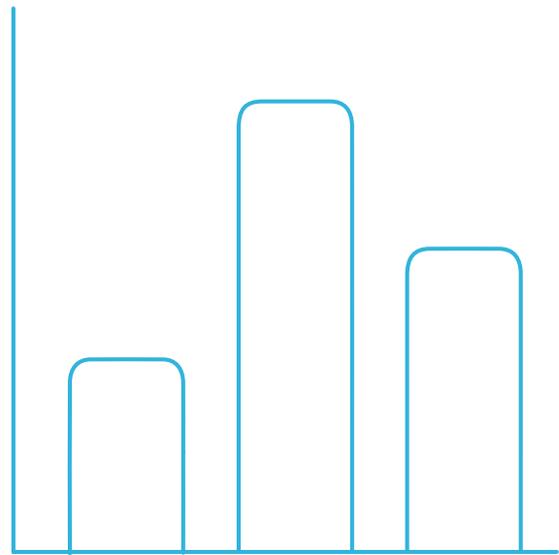
# Accessing data through the AIHW

The AIHW has robust arrangements in place to securely and ethically manage Australia's health and welfare data holdings and has been doing so for more than 30 years.

The AIHW manages this data with respect for its sensitivity, and with privacy and confidentiality assured through legislation, accountability practices and procedures. The AIHW also manages relationships with data custodians to ensure accountability and appropriate use for the AIHW for relevant data collections.

This ensures policymakers, service providers, and researchers are able to access independent, authoritative and comprehensive data.

Our data access arrangements detail who can take what actions, with what information, and when, under what circumstances, using what methods.



# Publicly available data

The AIHW publishes more than 200 reports and data releases annually, covering more than 75 health and welfare topics.

In addition, requests for access to other data holdings can be made via the AIHW website:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/about-our-data/our-data-collections>

We ensure that data privacy and confidentiality are maintained and that the requirements of the Privacy Act 1998 (Commonwealth) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act 1987 (Commonwealth) are met.



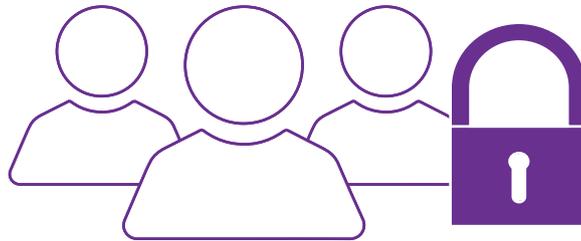
# Data on request

Where data is not publicly available, you may request it via our website:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/our-services/data-on-request>

Please note:

- ◆ Some data collections cannot be made publicly available
- ◆ Access to others need special approval
- ◆ In some instances, access is available through tables prepared by the AIHW for specific requests, (for which charges may apply).



All requests for sensitive data are assessed against legislation and privacy principles and agreements with partner policy agencies, to determine if the information can be lawfully disclosed.

# Sharing and release of data

There are four ways in which the AIHW manages the sharing and releasing of data.



Open access

Data are made publicly available with few or no restrictions on who may access the data and what they may do with it. For example, publishing data to a publicly accessible website—sometimes referred to as open access or open data.



Delivered access

Data are made available by direct delivery to the user's custody. For example, the user agrees to specific conditions associated with management and use of the data before we agree to deliver it to them.



Secure remote access

Data are made available to users via remote access that has a high level of security infrastructure control and where the users' activities can be remotely supervised. For example, the AIHW Secure Remote Access Environment (SRAE) is a secure cloud based platform for storing and enabling user access to unit record data.



Secure on-site access

Data are made available to users in a managed physical location that has a higher level of security infrastructure control and where the users' activities can be personally supervised. For example, the AIHW performs data linkage through the Data Integration Services Centre (DISC), that is available to authorised, specialist staff users.

Data are released through open access and shared through the other three modes.

# AIHW Standards

The Five Safes is an approach to thinking about, assessing and managing risks associated with data sharing and release.



The framework is a global standard for considering strategic, privacy, security, ethical and operational risks as part of a holistic assessment for data sharing or release.

The AIHW has embedded the five safes framework into our approach in making decisions about sharing and releasing data.



Safe projects

## **What is the purpose of the project?**

Use of the data is legal, ethical and the project is expected to deliver public benefit.



Safe people

## **Who can access the data?**

Users have the knowledge, skills and incentives to act in accordance with required standards of behaviour.

# AIHW Standards



Safe data

## **Is the data aggregated and treated to protect privacy and confidentiality of each individual?**

Data have been treated appropriately to minimise the potential for identification of individuals or organisations. For example, replacing date of birth with age group, substituting street address with postcode.



Safe settings

## **What controls are in place to protect the data and ensure access is only available to those who are authorised and approved to access it?**

There are practical controls on the way the data is accessed—both from a technology perspective and considering the physical environment.



Safe output

## **What controls are in place to ensure the outputs of the analysis are appropriate and non-disclosive?**

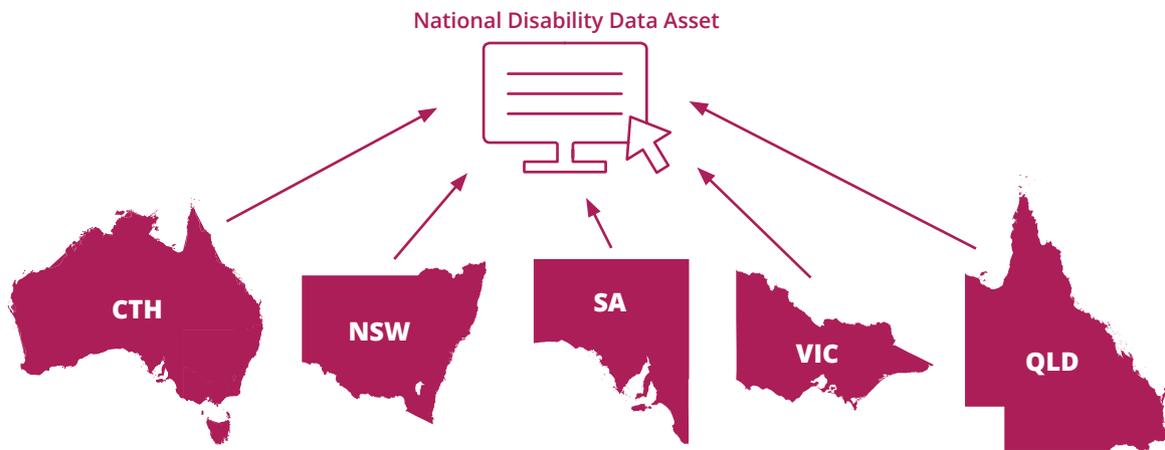
A final check of the statistical findings, before they are released, to minimise risk of identifying individuals or organisations. Methods used at this stage include suppressing small numbers and aggregating results.

Once a response to each of the five dimensions has been proposed, they are then considered jointly, to evaluate whether the overall arrangements are acceptable and appropriate.

# The Open Data Agenda

This agreement takes advantage of the insights gained from public data for research and evidence based program design, to better integrate data sharing between the different tiers of government.

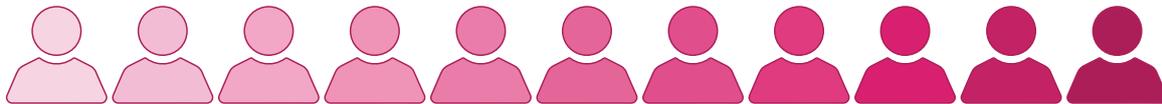
For example, the AIHW is leading the development of a National Disability Data Asset to better link and share data to measure and drive better outcomes for people with disability. Five jurisdictions, the Commonwealth, NSW, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland are active partners.



# Ethics Committee

The AIHW Ethics Committee exists to ensure data about people is handled with respect and in line with best practice.

It comprises 12 members representing a broad cross-section of the community, including professionals experienced in providing care, researchers, and people representing the general community.



The AIHW Ethics Committee:



ensures the collection, management and release of data are ethically acceptable and respect people's privacy, confidentiality and security requirements



asks questions and considers the purpose of research projects and other activities to make sure work is undertaken for public benefit, with respect for privacy and general community attitudes, and so that no unnecessary data is disclosed



requires regular monitoring of the progress of projects it has approved and audits of particularly sensitive data collections.

# About the AIHW

The AIHW is an independent statutory agency producing authoritative and accessible information and statistics to inform and support better policy and service delivery decisions, leading to better health and wellbeing for all Australians. We are focused on turning data into useful information and telling the broader story.



200+ publicly available reports and data releases annually covering over 75 health and welfare topics



180+ customised data extracts annually for researchers, consumers, service providers, and organisations



Controlled access to Australia's most comprehensive collection of health and welfare data



Full range of data services from requests and access, through to analysis and linkage

For questions and comments on accessing AIHW data or any related enquiries please contact the AIHW via email [info@aihw.gov.au](mailto:info@aihw.gov.au) or phone +61 2 6244 1000

P: +61 2 6244 1000

E: [info@aihw.gov.au](mailto:info@aihw.gov.au)

A: GPO Box 570 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia



Twitter: [@aihw](https://twitter.com/aihw)



LinkedIn: [au.linkedin.com/company/](https://au.linkedin.com/company/australian-institute-of-health-and-welfare)

[australian-institute-of-health-and-welfare](https://australian-institute-of-health-and-welfare)