

Information Paper

**Improving Statistics on
Children and Youth**

**An Information Development
Plan**

Australia

2006

Draft

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AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

EMBARGO: 11.30AM (CANBERRA TIME) JUN 2006

ABS Catalogue No. 4907.0

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CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
Preface	vii
Abbreviations	viii

CHAPTERS

One — What does this plan provide?	1
Two — Children and youth from a statistical perspective	3
Three — Data development needs	18
Four — Data development actions	27

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PREFACE

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the demand for data relating to children and youth, across the many and varied domains of the lives of children and young people. Good quality data are a critical requirement to inform the work of a wide range of groups including governments, researchers, communities and practitioners. Data are an integral part of the policy design and evaluation process, research agendas and decision making processes of communities and organisations.

This information paper, *Improving Statistics on Children and Youth: An Information Development Plan*, has been developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) National Children and Youth Statistics Unit (NCYSU). It is based on an understanding of the current key policy issue imperatives, the data required to inform these issues and the agreed data development actions necessary to address them. Development of the Plan has involved extensive consultation with a large range of national, state and territory government agencies and non-government research bodies. Staff in these organisations have given generously of their time and their contribution to this work is gratefully acknowledged.

This project has been guided by the ABS' Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group (CYSAG). This group comprises representatives of: the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Education, Science and Training, the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Productivity Commission, the Australian Institute of Family Studies, the Australian Institute of Criminology, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. This group has been instrumental in setting the direction of the project, as well as in the identification and articulation of the key policy and research issues, data development needs and related actions.

It is important to note that this Plan is one of several information development plans (IDPs) produced to improve statistics in a particular field or for a particular sub-population. Some of these plans overlap to some degree with this Plan. These include plans relating to health, crime and justice, education and training and rural and regional statistics. While relevant aspects of these plans have been incorporated into this Plan, readers are strongly encouraged to also refer to these other IDPs.

Dennis Trewin
Australian Statistician

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CHAPTER 1

WHAT DOES THE PLAN PROVIDE?

OVERVIEW

This Plan, when finalised, will be an agreement among key stakeholders in the field of children and youth on the statistical development work required to better inform and support the key policy and research issues facing governments and practitioners in the field. The Plan will also articulate the individual and shared responsibilities of the ABS and major users and data custodians for undertaking agreed data development actions to meet the identified range of data needs. The data development actions described in this Plan should significantly improve data quality and assist in maximising the use of currently available data.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

This draft Plan has been developed through a collaborative and consultative approach with a number of agencies in the children and youth field. Initial consultations with CYSAG members centred around the identification of the key policy and research issues in the children and youth field. These issues were presented in an information paper titled *Key Issues Relating to Children and Youth* (cat. no. 4908.0), released by the ABS in April 2005. An additional paper, *The Field of Children and Youth Statistics, Australia 2005* (cat. no. 4910.0), was also released at this time. This paper discusses the field of statistics relevant to children and youth, and presents the various frameworks, policy contexts and statistical standards relevant to the field. These papers provide background information relevant to this Plan and it is recommended that readers also refer to these papers. They are available from the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>.

Following the release of these papers, consultation commenced with key national government agencies and consisted of a series of bilateral meetings with senior staff, researchers and policy advisers within each agency. Each meeting took the form of a discussion of the key issues, followed by identification of statistical information priorities (including gaps and deficiencies) from the agency's perspective. The data development actions being undertaken by the agency were also discussed. The information collected was then collated to clarify the key issues and related data development needs for the children and youth field as a whole, and is presented in this draft IDP.

The third and final phase of consultation will involve seeking comment on this draft IDP from national collaborative bodies, non-government organisations and selected state and territory government departments and agencies. In addition, agency commitment to lead and/or support data development actions to address data gaps will be negotiated with relevant agencies.

During development of the draft Plan there was ongoing dialogue with other sections of the ABS, including those who were preparing, or had already released, similar plans for improvement of statistics to meet information needs in fields relevant to children and youth. These plans include: *National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice Statistics* (cat. no. 4520.0) and *Measuring Learning in Australia: Plan to Improve*

DEVELOPMENT OF THE
PLAN *continued*

the Quality, Coverage and Use of Education and Training Statistics 2004 (cat. no. 4231.0).

CONTENT OUTLINE

The field of children and youth covering policies, key issues, stakeholders and data collections is described in Chapter Two. Chapter Three presents the agreed data development needs according to a framework based on the key policy issues. Data development actions, currently underway and/or planned, relevant to the identified data development needs are listed in Chapter Four. The agency or agencies with overall responsibility for the action are also indicated. It is envisaged that the final IDP will also include a number of new data development actions aimed at addressing the major data gaps identified.

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INTRODUCTION

It is recognised that children and youth develop in the context of families and communities. They are influenced by their participation in a variety of settings, including education and work, and through their interactions with the immediate environment. Along with parents, families and communities, children are co-creators of the circumstances that determine their life outcomes. The life outcomes children and youth experience are also shaped by the environments in which they live and the social and economic factors to which they are exposed. Governments are interested in positively influencing the environments of young people. They aim to encourage and facilitate young people's participation in education, work, family and community life to improve their current and future well-being.

Defining children and youth

For policy development and research purposes, age is the key means used to identify and target the population groups of children and youth. In this context, the age groups used to define children and youth may be based on the developmental stages (physical, cognitive and social) that occur in the transition to adulthood. Age based definitions may also be related to levels of dependency (physical, emotional, social and financial) that are experienced at different stages of development. For youth, age is also associated with varying levels of social responsibility and legal rights. In addition, children and youth may be defined for a specific purpose at hand, for example the development of a program to target a specific group.

Given the diversity of purposes for which information is needed about children and youth, there is difficulty in determining clear, yet flexible, age standards for use in data collection and outputs to suit all user purposes, and ensure comparability across information sources. For example, in published outputs, the ABS presents data for children and youth in 5 year age groups with 0–14 years and 15–24 years being the standard broad age groups for children and youth respectively. These age groups are not suitable for all purposes, for example in the child protection field the population aged 0–17 years is of interest, whereas the juvenile justice sector is interested in the population aged 10–17 years, however this age range can differ slightly across jurisdictions.

The wide range of age definitions required relating to children and youth, and the lack of a standard definition, presents an extra level of complexity when addressing data needs in the field. Further discussion on definitions and concepts of children and youth is provided in the information paper *Field of Children and Youth Statistics, Australia 2005* (cat. no. 4910.0).

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS
IN THE CHILDREN AND
YOUTH IDP

There are many stakeholder agencies in the children and youth field operating at both a national and state level. Major national stakeholder agencies in the children and youth field are listed below.

*Australian Bureau of
Statistics*

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's official statistical organisation. The ABS is an independent statutory authority which assists and encourages informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community. The ABS collects a wealth of data from survey, administration and census collections.

In 2003, the ABS established the National Children and Youth Statistics Unit to provide statistical leadership and coordination across the field of children and youth statistics, with the aim of guiding and influencing statistical activity, both ABS and non-ABS, in this field. The Unit also periodically undertakes analysis and reporting relevant to key children and youth issues.

*Australian Council for
Educational Research*

Established in 1930, the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has a long history as a provider of educational research and support to education policy makers and professional practitioners. It is committed to creating and distributing research-based knowledge, products and services to improve learning across the life span in both formal and informal settings.

*Australian Institute of
Criminology*

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) is Australia's national agency for crime and criminal justice research. The functions of the AIC include conducting criminological research, communicating the results of research, conducting or arranging conferences and seminars, and publishing material arising out of the AIC's work. The Institute draws on information supplied to it by a wide variety of sources and is a data custodian for a wide variety of data, including juvenile crime and justice.

*Australian Institute of
Family Studies*

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) was established in 1980 to promote the identification and understanding of factors affecting marital and family stability in Australia. AIFS has a role in informing and influencing policy development, public understanding and informed debate about factors affecting family functioning and well-being. AIFS has research programs on children and parenting, family and marriage, and family and society. It manages Growing Up in Australia: the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC); the National Child Protection Clearinghouse; and the Stronger Families Learning Exchange.

*Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare*

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), established in 1987, is Australia's national agency for health and welfare statistics and information. AIHW has a key role in national health and welfare information management and data development, through the National Health Information Management Group, the National Community Services Information Management Group and the National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Group. AIHW produces compendiums in the children and youth field. The AIHW are also custodians of key administrative data sets relating to children, youth and families, and coordinate and manage their development.

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) is a national collaboration of researchers, policy makers and practitioners from a broad range of disciplines who are working together with the aim of building a better future for Australia's children and young people. ARACY is involved with a number of projects relevant to data development and enhancement in the children and youth field, most notably the National Data Network and the Alliance Clearing House.

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) develops and implements policies and programs that support an effectively functioning labour market and workplaces, with higher productivity and higher pay. DEWR also provides services to job seekers, employers, employees and researchers.

Department of Education, Science and Training

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) develops and implements policies to ensure the continuing relevance of education, science and training to contemporary needs and the growing requirement for lifelong learning. DEST is responsible for the Higher Education Statistics Collection data for non-government schools and the pre-school census. It funds the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth.

Department of Family and Community Services

The Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) is responsible for social policies and support affecting Australian society and the living standards of Australian families. FaCS has five key policy outcomes: An integrated social support system; Greater self reliance and engagement for those in need through shared responsibility, practical support and help with housing; Seniors, people with disabilities, carers, youth and women are supported, recognised and encouraged to participate in the community; Families and children have choices and opportunities; and Strong and resilient communities. The Department provides funding for two significant data collections projects— LSAC and Footprints in Time: the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC).

Department of Health and Ageing

The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) has eleven portfolio outcomes: Population Health; Medicines and Medical Services; Aged Care and Population Ageing; Primary Care; Rural Health; Hearing Services; Indigenous Health; Private Health; Health System Capacity and Quality; Acute Care; and Health and Medical Research. As well as being the main department responsible for government policy relating to health outcomes for children and youth it is also closely involved in several important data holdings, such as the AIHW's National Drug Strategy Household Surveys and the Illicit Drugs Reporting System.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is Australia's principal provider of vocational education and training (VET) research and statistics. NCVER is responsible for collecting and managing national VET and New Apprenticeship statistics, and managing national surveys of VET graduates and students, and employers' views of training. It undertakes a strategic program of research, and collects and provides VET research findings from Australian and international sources. NCVER is a not-for-profit company owned by the state, territory and federal ministers responsible for vocational education and training.

Productivity Commission

The Productivity Commission is the Australian Government's principal advisory body on all aspects of micro-economic reform. The Commission's work covers all sectors of the economy. It extends to the public and private sectors and focuses on areas of Commonwealth as well as state and territory responsibility. The statutory functions of the Commission include: holding public inquiries and reporting on matters related to industry and productivity; providing secretariat services and research services to government bodies such as the Council of Australian Governments; initiating research on industry and productivity issues; and promoting public understanding of matters related to industry and productivity. The Commission may also undertake any other activities incidental to these functions and has some flexibility in how it performs these functions.

Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

The mission of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research (ICHR) is to improve and to promote the health and well-being of all children through the unique application of multi-disciplinary research. The Institute does this through: conducting high quality research; applying research findings to improve the health of children, adolescents and families; teaching the next generation of health researchers; and advocating for research and for children. Priorities of the Institute include: aboriginal child health; asthma, allergies and respiratory diseases; birth defects; cancer and leukaemia; developmental disorders; infectious diseases; mental health; and perinatal epidemiology.

POLICY BACKGROUND

Governments are interested in positively influencing the environments of children, youth and their families. Governments aim to foster positive environments by providing support and services relating to areas such as education, health, crime and justice, welfare and work. The provision of such support needs to be accurately targeted to ensure those in need receive the most appropriate assistance. Data which support a better understanding of the needs of all children and youth and their families, are therefore of great importance.

A number of government initiatives are driving the need for a better understanding of data needs and availability. Federal government initiatives include—

- The *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy*, which provides the framework for the development and implementation of the federal government's commitment to help support and strengthen families as a fundamental unit of society. This policy aims to combine delivery of services and policies for families in transition or need. Specific objectives include reducing family breakdowns, better integration of government services, development of youth policy and improved monitoring of program performance and improved service delivery.
- The *National Agenda for Early Childhood*, is the federal government's policy for addressing the early development needs of children. Although still in its development stages, the Agenda sets directions and actions for how parents can best be supported and how young children's needs can be met. It also aims to raise public awareness regarding the importance of the early childhood years and address the underlying social and economic factors that affect young children. Key action areas already identified are: healthy young families; supporting families and parents; early learning and care; and creating child-friendly communities.

POLICY BACKGROUND

continued

- The federal government's policy framework on young people, which covers their health, well-being and development, is articulated in the *Living Choices* statement. This emphasises the importance of reaching adult independence and supports social and economic participation.
- The *Australians Working Together* initiative, which includes specific help for youth with work experience, learning new skills, education and training and looking for work. The *Welfare to Work* initiative is another government policy for assisting young people, in particular young single parents and youth with a disability.

In addition, a range of national and state initiatives are adding to the statistical information available in the children and youth field. Some of these include the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) *Young Australians: Their Health & Well-being, 2003* and *A Picture of Australia's Children* (2005); the ABS' *Census of Population and Housing: Australia's Youth 2001* (2004); the NSW Government's *Families First Strategy*, a framework to measure the outcomes of services and strategies that have demonstrated significant positive impacts on children and parents; *Best Start Indicators Project* by the Victorian Government which measures the improvements in the health, development, learning and well-being of children; and the Tasmanian Government's *Our Kids Strategic Policy Framework* which provides direction for the planning, monitoring, management, evaluation and enhancement of services and interventions targeted at children.

Prevention of harm is a key theme of current policies and is considered a cost effective approach to improving health and well-being. It is also clear that a coordinated and holistic approach to issues facing children and youth is required. Certainly areas such as child development, health and well-being are closely linked together and well-being outcomes have common determinants.

While each agency is responsible for policy and program development within a specific area (e.g. health, education, employment) the cross-cutting nature of the field means that specific areas can not be looked at in isolation. As such policies relating to them are strongly interdependent and the departments responsible for the policies often have to act in a coordinated way through collaborative working groups and initiatives. In addition to federal government departments and agencies, state governments are also responsible for developing policies and programs targeted at the children and youth population. Also important are a large number of non-government organisations that play a significant role in the field.

KEY ISSUES FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The key issues for children and youth were identified through consultation with stakeholders. They relate to the areas of policy concern discussed above. In total, seven key issues of relevance, three for children and four for youth, have been identified—

- childhood and maternal health
- the abuse and neglect of children
- children's learning and development
- youth educational attainment and participation
- transitions to independent living
- social participation of youth
- risk behaviours.

KEY ISSUES FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH
continued

These issues are not mutually exclusive, nor are the issues identified for each group exclusive to those groups. For example, issues concerning access to education, social participation and risk behaviours are common to both children and youth. However, they are presented here as discrete issues for ease of discussion and analysis.

The key issues identified in this paper are also bound together by cross-cutting themes, of which there are seven. These seven cross-cutting themes are dealt with in more detail in Chapter Three. Each of the seven key issues are described more fully in the following paragraphs.

*Childhood and maternal
health*

Childhood health is an important issue with numerous health and welfare policies aimed at improving the health of children and mothers. For example, preventable deaths due to accidents and injuries are of concern. In addition, there is a wide body of research supporting the notion that the health of the mother and the child in the early years of life influence health and well-being patterns throughout the life cycle. Accordingly, interventions in relation to maternal and early child health are seen as an important way of improving the health of the population overall.

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES

An overall snapshot of the health and well-being of children and mothers is provided by the ongoing ABS' *National Health Surveys*. These surveys provide an understanding of the health status, risk factors and health related actions taken, and their relationship to demographic and socioeconomic factors. However, data for some risk factors are only available for those aged 18 and over.

The *1995 National Nutrition Survey* provided population data at a national level on the nutritional habits and behaviours of children and youth (aged two years and over) and included data on children's measured height and weight. Data on children's participation in selected leisure activities, including organised sports outside of school, is available from the three-yearly *Survey of Children's Participation in Culture and Leisure Activities*.

Annual national information on births is available from the ABS' *Births* collection, which includes data on birth weight.

Immunisation is seen as one of the main ways of preventing the incidence of disease in children. The *Australia Childhood Immunisation Register*, established by the Health Insurance Commission in 1996 has vaccination rates for children aged 0–6 years registered with Medicare.

Information on mortality (e.g. causes such as perinatal conditions, motor vehicle accidents and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and morbidity (e.g. injuries and conditions such as asthma and diabetes) is available from a range of ABS and non-ABS sources. The annual ABS' *Causes of Death* collection provides information on mortality rates and causes of death across Australian states and territories, including details on children and perinatal deaths. The AIHW's *National Hospital Morbidity Database* and *National Cancer Statistics Clearing House*, and the *National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (Communicable Diseases Network of Australia and New Zealand)* partly provide a picture of the incidence and patterns of morbidity among children. The AIHW is also responsible for the annual *Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health*

Childhood and maternal health continued

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES *continued*

collection, which covers children's encounters with general practitioners and, as such, is a source of information on child morbidity. Information on dental health is available from AIHW's annual *National Dental Telephone Interview Survey*.

The second wave of LSAC is currently in the field. This study provides a longitudinal analysis of health and well-being of Australian children from birth, including the factors which impact on health outcomes through the life cycle.

The abuse and neglect of children

This issue focuses on those children who are in need of protection. It includes children who have been abused (physically, sexually or emotionally), neglected or otherwise harmed, children living in families with violence problems and children whose parents cannot provide adequate care and protection for them.

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES

Data on the incidence of various risk factors relating to abuse and neglect are available from a range of sources. Background information on divorce can be obtained from ABS' *Marriage and Divorce* statistics and family relations are examined in *1997 Family Characteristics Survey*, *2002 General Social Survey* and the *Child and Adolescent Component of the 1998 National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being*.

The *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program National Data Collection* is an administrative data set that includes information about people receiving accommodation support and hence provides an indirect measure of children experiencing housing problems.

The incidence of different forms of abuse or neglect can be obtained from the annual AIHW collections: *Child Protection Notifications, Investigations and Substantiations; Children on Care and Protection Orders; and Children in Out-of-Home Care*. The ABS' *1996 Women's Safety Survey* includes data on women abused as children, while the comparable *Personal Safety Survey* (in the field in 2005) will provide this data for both men and women.

The ABS' annual collections of crime and justice data highlights the level and nature of recorded crime (including assault and sexual assault) and records details regarding victims of recorded crime.

Children's learning and development

Children's learning relates to all learning settings that occur up to and including primary school years. This covers early learning experiences, both formal (preschool, child care centres, school) and informal learning settings (homes, play groups). Quality early learning and care experiences in the years before school lay the foundation for a smooth transition to school and later school success. Primary school years are also very important to a child's learning, and the successful transition from primary to secondary school is an important influence on a person's later learning experience and educational success. Involvement in learning and development activities is an important aspect of children's social participation.

Children's learning and development continued

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES

Information on school students is available annually from the *National School Statistics Collection*, particularly numbers by government/non-government school, Indigenous status and state and territory. Small geographic area details of children's attendance at school is presented in the five-yearly *Census of Population and Housing*. In addition, reading, writing and numeracy benchmarks are compiled by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in the *National Performance Measurement of Schools* using a range of administrative data sources, and focussing on key student outcomes.

Information on preschool students is covered by the ABS' three-yearly *Child Care Survey*, the Department of Family and Community Service's (FaCS) *Child Care Census* and the Department of Education, Science and Training's (DEST) annual *National Indigenous Pre-school Census*.

The ABS' *1997 Time Use Survey* has some information on time spent by parents teaching children at home, while the five-yearly *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers* cover education of young children with disabilities. Information on expenditure on preschools is included as part of the annual *Government Finance Statistics Collection*.

Youth educational attainment and participation

Individuals can benefit from the opportunity early in life to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and understandings necessary for lifelong learning, employment and full participation in society. Education is essential to providing young people with skills and knowledge for future employment, as well as providing an environment for the development of social and life skills. In addition, higher levels of education, in particular literacy, have been associated with improved health and well-being.

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES

The ABS' publication, *Measuring Learning in Australia: A framework for education and training statistics 2003*, provides an overall framework for organising and presenting information relating to education and training.

Information relating to participation in education, patterns of study, levels of educational attainment, the unmet demand for education and the transition of young people from education to work is covered by the ABS' annual *Survey of Education and Work*. For detailed geographic breakdowns of educational attainment and participation the five-yearly *Census of Population and Housing* is a key source. Information on numbers and characteristics of school children enrolled in secondary schools is available from the annual *National School Statistics Collection*. Information on Indigenous students is available from the five-yearly *Census of Population and Housing* and the annual *National School Statistics Collection*. In addition, literacy, numeracy and science benchmarks for secondary school students (15 year-olds) are sourced from the *Programme for International Student Assessment*.

Administrative data on participation in further education are collected annually by DEST, the *Higher Education Student Data Collection*, and the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER), the *Vocational Education and Training Statistics Collection*.

Youth educational attainment and participation continued

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES *continued*

Lifelong learning patterns are more difficult to track, but detailed information on education including a person's educational history was collected in the ABS' four-yearly *Survey of Education and Training*. The *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY)*, managed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), are also a valuable information source for understanding pathways through education and training adopted by youth.

Transitions to independent living

Young people are in a transition phase from being dependent children to independent adults. This transition phase involves numerous steps, not the least of which is the transition from education to paid employment. Young people who have been unable to make this transition can face significant barriers to gaining full-time employment and financial security in the longer-term. In addition, particular groups of young people have been identified as being at greatest risk of making unsuccessful transitions to independent living. For young people failure to make an effective transition can have a detrimental impact on the quality of their lives in both the short and long term, across a number of areas.

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES

A wealth of information relating to the transition from education to work is available annually via the ABS' *Survey of Education and Work*. Detailed information on youth trends in the labour force is explained in the monthly *Labour Force Survey*, including information on employment and unemployment. Detailed information on the job search experiences of youth are available from the annual *Job Search Experience Survey*.

Small geographic area detail of labour force information including occupation and industry is available from the five-yearly *Census of Population and Housing*. The census also identifies Indigenous youth.

Data on the labour force experience of youth who undertook different types of education and training can be assessed from the ACER LSAY. The annual *Graduate Destination Survey* collects information on higher education graduates' experiences of entry into the labour force. Relevant vocational education and training statistics are compiled annually by the NCVER, including the *Student Outcomes Survey*. FaCS holds a wealth of administrative data related to this topic including the Longitudinal Data Set, a rich source of information based on a sample of welfare recipients. The data set provides information on their changing status with regard to welfare payments over time.

Social participation of youth

Social participation is the active engagement and interaction of people within the community. Positive social participation provides opportunities for personal development, education and building of social networks, all of which are important for individual health and well-being. In addition, communities benefit from such participation through the provision of services and activities that might not otherwise occur, and the building of social networks between community members. Negative social participation has consequences for young people and it is important to understand the factors leading to it.

Social participation of youth continued

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES

The ABS' framework for social capital is a useful means of organising information of youth social participation. Information on social networks, cultural and recreational activities, social participation, personal safety and security and aspects of health and well-being was collected in the *2002 General Social Survey*, but only for those aged 18 years and over. Similar information is available for Indigenous Australians from the *2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*. The *Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia* (HILDA) survey collects longitudinal information of a wide range of areas of social concern relating to youth and social participation. The five-yearly *Census of Population and Housing* contains information at small geographic areas relating to religious affiliation, Australian Citizenship and identifies Indigenous people.

Detailed information on voluntary workers is covered in the annual *Survey of Voluntary Work*, for those 18 years and over. Social participation, recreation and leisure and voluntary work and care activities according to daily activity patterns are also available from the *1997 Time Use Survey* for people aged 15 years and over.

Fear of crime and being a victim of crime can lead to social disengagement. Information relating to household and personal crime is available from the ongoing *Crime and Safety Survey* which covers people aged 18 years and over and includes their perception of problems, fear of crime and behaviour as a result of crime. The *1996 Women's Safety Survey* provides information on women's safety at home and in the community and, in particular, on the nature and extent of violence against women in Australia. The *Personal Safety Survey* (in the field in 2005) also includes information on the male experience of crime.

Risk behaviours

Youth is an important time for developing attitudes that will influence behaviours throughout life. As young people gain greater independence, they are exposed to new experiences, some of which may result in behaviours that lead to poor health or poor living conditions, in both the short and the long-term. These behaviours can include: tobacco use; excessive alcohol use; illicit drug use; poor nutrition and diet; inadequate physical exercise; unprotected sex; dangerous driving; self-harm; and involvement in criminal activity.

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES

Most of the current information available from ABS sources on risk factors applies to those persons aged 18 years and over. The main source of national information on risk factors is the ongoing *National Health Survey* which includes information on injury, accidents and contraceptive practices among women. The *2002 General Social Survey* also covers persons aged 18 years and over and includes some limited information on health and crime victimisation.

In the area of eating and nutrition, the *1995 National Nutrition Survey* collected information for all persons aged two years and over on food and beverage intake, physical measurements, food related habits and attitudes and food consumption patterns. The AIHW's *1999 National Physical Activity Survey* covered persons aged 18–75 years and measured leisure-time physical activity, and assessed knowledge of current public health messages on physical activity.

*Risk behaviours
continued*

OVERVIEW OF DATA SOURCES *continued*

Information on deaths occurring due to risk behaviours is collected by the annual *Causes of Death* collection which includes indicators on post-mortem, drowning, suicide and deaths due to external causes. Indigenous deaths can be separately identified. The Australian Transport Safety Bureau's *Road Fatalities Australia* provides annual data on the number of fatalities, monthly by age groups (0–16 years, 17–20 years and 21–25 years).

For annual information on crime and criminal behaviour the annual collection, *Victims of Recorded Crime* covers children aged 0–14 years. The ABS' ongoing *Crime and Safety Survey* collects information from people aged 18 years and over regarding their perception of problems, fear of crime, behaviour as a result of crime and data relating to household and personal crime. The national *2001 Young People and Domestic Violence Survey* surveyed attitudes towards domestic violence among persons aged 12–20 years. The AIHW are custodians of the *Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set* which provides a unique source of nationally comparable, policy relevant information on the flow of young offenders through the justice system over time.

In relation to drugs specifically, the AIHW's ongoing *National Drug Strategy Household Survey* has information on drug-related awareness, knowledge and behaviours and attitudes on drug-related policies. The AIHW's *Illicit Drug Reporting System* monitors the price, purity, availability and patterns of use of the main illicit drugs, as well as acting as an early warning system for emerging trends in illicit drug markets. The *2001 National Drug and Alcohol Research Survey* contains hospital separations with variables of principal diagnosis, age, sex, area of residence and Indigenous status. The ongoing *National Survey of Australian Secondary School Students* surveys government schools and variables collected include: knowledge, and sources of knowledge, of the transmission of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases; attitudes to HIV, sexual practices and contraception, alcohol consumption and drugs. The ongoing *Australian Secondary Students Alcohol and Drug Survey* provides national and state estimates for those aged 12–17 years, by sex, for alcohol and drug use. The AIHW's *Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set* provides national and State and Territory statistics on alcohol and other drug treatment services, the clients who use these services, and the type of drug problems for which treatment is being sought.

Research has identified that mental health is closely related to a range of risk behaviours. Two important sources for information on youth and mental health are the *Child and Adolescent Component of the National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being 1998* (conducted by the then Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care) and the ABS' *1997 National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being of Adults*. The *Child and Adolescent Component of the National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being 1998* collected information on children (4–12 years) and adolescents (13–17 years).

Information was obtained from the parents of all respondents and directly from adolescents. The *1997 National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being of Adults* covered those aged 18 years and over, and provides information on the prevalence of a range of major mental disorders.

There are also a number of broad information sources that deal with the outcomes of risk behaviours (such as hospital statistics and the communicable diseases register).

OVERVIEW OF THE
NATIONAL POLICY AND
STATISTICAL FIELD

The following diagram provides an overview of the national policy and statistical field for children and youth. The national stakeholders identified in the diagram are involved in the field through having direct responsibility for policy development; a significant role in data provision and/or research; or are collaborative bodies with influence on the development of policy and/or data. In order to reduce complexity, in the instances where a number of related groups are involved, only the highest level group is included. In addition, only selected policies and data collections have been included. The overview is considered to be representative of the children and youth field even though not every organisation or relevant activity is included. The overview has been developed based on the policies and data sources relevant to the seven key issues for children and youth.

Draft

Overview of the National Policy and Statistical Field: Children and Youth		
Policies, Programs and Strategies	Australian Government Departments and Agencies	Data Collections and Outputs
Early Intervention, Youth, Crime and Families Strategy	Attorney-General's Department	Young People and Domestic Violence Survey
Australian Network of Industry Career Advisers (ANICA) Initiative Australian Schools Agenda National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy National Literacy and Numeracy Plan National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2004–2010 Our Universities – Backing Australia's Future	Education, Science and Training	Higher Education Student Data Collection National Pre-school Census – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and All Students
Green Corps Indigenous Employment Policy Job Network Job Placement, Employment and Training Program Workplace Relations Provisions	Employment and Workplace Relations	Labour Market Assistance Outcomes Labour Market and Related Payments
Mentor Marketplace National Agenda for Early Childhood National Approach to Parenting, Early Childhood Intervention and Child Abuse Protection National Homeless Strategy National Youth Roundtable Reconnect Stronger Families and Communities Strategy Tomorrow's Children: Australia's National Plan of Action Against the Commercial Exploitation of Children	Family and Community Services	Child Care Census FaCS Longitudinal Data Set Footprints in Time: Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
Eat Well Australia: An agenda for action for public health nutrition: 2000–2010 Healthy Weight 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutritional Strategy and Action Plan National Action Plan for the Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health National Breastfeeding Strategy National Co-morbidity Initiative National Drug Strategy National HIV/AIDS Strategy 2005–2008 National Hepatitis C Strategy National Indigenous Australians Sexual Health Strategy National Immunisation Program National Injury Prevention Plan National Psychostimulants Initiative National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2005–2008 National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health National Youth Suicide Prevention Plan Voluntary Folate Fortification Strategy	Health and Ageing	Child and Adolescent Component of the National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing Australian Childhood Immunisation Register
Backing Australia's Sporting Ability – A More Active Australia	Australian Sports Commission	
National Road Safety Strategy	Australian Transport Safety Bureau	Road Fatalities Australia

Policies, Programs and Strategies

Australian Government Departments and Agencies

Data Collections and Outputs

National Centre for Vocational and Education Research

New Apprenticeship Collection
 Student Outcomes Survey
 Survey of Employer Use and Views of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) System
 Survey of Indigenous VET Students
 Survey of Medium Term Outcomes of VET Students (Down-the-Track)
 VET Finance Collection
 VET Provider Collection

Productivity Commission

Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report
 Report on Government Services

Research Organisations

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Census of Population and Housing
 Crime and Justice Statistics
 Culture and Recreation Statistics (e.g. Survey of Children's Participation in Culture and Leisure Activities)
 Demography (e.g. Vitals collections)
 Education and Training Collections (e.g. Survey of Education and Work)
 Family and Community Collections (e.g. Child Care Survey and Family Characteristics Survey)
 Health Collections (e.g. National Health Survey and Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers)
 Labour Statistics (e.g. Labour Force Survey)

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services National Minimum Data Set
 Child Protection Data Collection
 Children's Services National Minimum Data Set
 Juvenile Justice Minimum Data Set
 National Cancer Statistics Clearinghouse
 National Drug Strategy Household Survey
 National Hospital Morbidity Database
 National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System
 National Physical Activity Survey
 Picture of Australia's Children
 Supported Assisted Accommodation Program

Australian Council for Educational Research

Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
 Program for International Student Assessment
 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Australian Institute of Criminology

Australian Crime: Facts and Figures
 Juveniles in Detention data set
 Juvenile Drug Use Careers of Offenders Survey

Policies, Programs and Strategies

Research Organisations

Data Collections and Outputs

- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Centre for Behavioural Research in Cancer
- Centre for Community Child Health
- Centre on Sex, Health and Society
- Institute of Child Health Research
- Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research
- National Alcohol and Drug Research Centre

- Australian Temperament Project
Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
- Australian Secondary School Students Alcohol and Drug Survey
- Australian Early Development Index
- National Survey of Australian Secondary School Students and Sexual Health
- Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey
- Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey
- Illicit Drug Reporting System

Collaborative Groups

- Australian Council for Children and Parenting
- Cultural Ministers' Council
- Graduate Careers Council of Australia
- Health, Community and Disability Services Ministerial Council
- Housing Ministers' Conference
- Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy

- Graduate Destination Survey

- Framework for Vocational Education in Schools
- National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century
- National Strategy for the Education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Stepping Forward – improving pathways for all young people

- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
- Ministerial Council on the Administration of Justice
- National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
- National Investment for the Early Years
- Taskforce for Child Health, Development and Wellbeing

- National Schools Statistics Collection
- Australian National Report on Schooling

- National Agenda for Early Childhood

OVERVIEW

As can be seen in Chapter Two, there is a wide range of data sources currently available to stakeholders to provide the statistical information required to inform the development and monitoring of policies (particularly those relevant to the identified key issues) as well as the provision of a basis for targeting policy relevant research.

However, consultation with stakeholders, both users and custodians of data, has shown that there are some inadequacies, deficiencies and gaps in existing data sources which affect the useability and relevance of available statistical information derived from these sources. Through this consultation, the major national stakeholders have identified and agreed upon a total of 35 areas of particular need where varying degrees of statistical data development work are required to address the deficiencies. This chapter of the draft Plan summarises the nature of these needs, and describes them in the context of the specific aspects requiring improvement or development.

DATA DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

For the purposes of presentation, the data development needs are categorised according to their relevance to a key issue for either children or youth. However, seven of the 35 data development needs are cross-cutting (that is, pertaining to most or all of the key issues). These are presented first, though no ranking of importance should be attached to the order in which needs are presented.

Data development needs may include: the collection of more frequent data; the introduction of new data items in existing collections; the adoption of standards; and the introduction of a new collection.

CROSS-CUTTING DATA DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

The cross-cutting data development needs span the field in terms of bridging all social areas of concern relating to children and youth and hence overlap the key issues. The cross-cutting needs themselves are not mutually exclusive.

IMPROVE AGENCY COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION ACROSS THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FIELD IN RELATION TO DATA ACTIVITIES [1]

Identified across the field was the need for better cross agency coordination of data activities. With numerous government agencies, collaborative working groups, research organisations and ministerial councils involved in data collection activities (survey and administrative), improved coordination was seen as very important to support better collection, access and use of data. The need to avoid duplication of effort was identified as a related issue.

CROSS-CUTTING DATA
DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
continued

IMPROVE DATA COMPARABILITY ACROSS COLLECTIONS AND
JURISDICTIONS [2]

There is a strong need for better comparability of data across collections and jurisdictions. In particular, better comparability of administrative collections across jurisdictions would significantly improve data usability (e.g. abuse and neglect data, homeless data). The wider application of such data are hampered by a lack of comparability in terms of both data holdings (frequency, reference period, population) and meta-data (scope, definitions and standards). Data comparability could also be improved through the better coordination of survey methodologies, facilitating greater comparability between survey collections (e.g. comparability between the *General Social Survey* and the *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*, relating to Indigenous and remoteness data).

DEVELOP AND PROMULGATE THE USE OF STANDARDS AND CONCEPTS
RELATING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH [3]

Standards, including definitions of children and youth and concepts such as youth dependency differ across data collections. As such, it is often difficult to reconcile data from different collections, such as those from administrative data sets and surveys. Related to this is the limited use currently made of standard question modules (e.g. for measuring disability, or income). While work on developing national minimum data-sets is underway in some areas (e.g. children's services, juvenile justice), a more widespread adoption of statistical standards and concepts is required across the children and youth field.

IMPROVE THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF DATA ON SPECIFIC TARGET
POPULATIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH [4]

For the children and youth population there are a number of groups for whom data are considered seriously deficient and in need of significant improvement.

Indigenous

For the Indigenous population, data needs include—

- Small area data, at both the regional (sub-state) and community level.
- All aspects of mental health.
- Social participation of youth.
- Prevalence of abuse and neglect among children and young people.
- Longitudinal data to identify pathways and at-risk groups.
- Social and emotional development of children.
- Youth substance abuse.
- Risk and protective factors including nutrition, physical activity, body mass index and smoking.
- School attendance and absenteeism.
- More frequent data on Indigenous youth in the labour market.
- Data that allow the identification of multiple disadvantage facing many Indigenous children and youth.

Also improved identification in specific collections, such as—

- Birth and death registrations.
- Hospital separations.

*CROSS-CUTTING DATA
DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
continued*

Indigenous continued

- Australian Childhood Immunisation Register.

Children and youth with disabilities

There is a lack of data on children and youth with disabilities. In particular there is a need for data on—

- Children and youth with compounded disability.
- Children with a disability and their families who live in regional and remote areas.
- Data on the transitions from education to work, and more broadly to independent living.
- Children with a disability and their families who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Data are lacking on the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) population. In particular, data are required on—

- Health risk and protective factors for babies and mothers.
- Participation in early childhood learning.
- School attendance and absenteeism.
- Incidence of racism.
- Data to assess the impact of multicultural background on education participation and transitions to work.
- Regional data for children from CALD backgrounds and their families.
- Longitudinal data on children and their families.
- Improved administrative data systems to allow the tracking of migrants and their children through support systems.

Socio-economically disadvantaged children and youth

There is a lack of data on children and youth facing socioeconomic disadvantage. The following data needs were identified—

- Those experiencing homelessness and those at risk of it.
- Families with children in inadequate housing (eg overcrowding, unsafe neighbourhoods, structurally substandard housing etc).
- Service use and met and unmet demand, particularly for target groups.
- Take up rates for specific payments, along with the impact of child support payments on the child's well-being.
- Welfare services working together.
- Outcomes data including longitudinal studies.
- Interrelationships between family structures along with economic circumstances, family support and family network patterns (including out-of-household family structures and relationships (eg children living with grandparents)).
- Children and youth with parents who had a mental illness.
- Children and youth whose parents were in prison.
- Children in foster care.

**CROSS-CUTTING DATA
DEVELOPMENT NEEDS**
continued

**IMPROVE THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF SMALL AREA DATA AVAILABLE
ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH [5]**

Improved data on children and youth living in regional and remote Australia was identified across the field. Stakeholders identified a need for data at all different levels of spatial disaggregation including state and territory level, regional level and community level. Needs identified included—

- Better estimates, on a broader range of variables, of children living in rural and remote areas.
- Data on the access to, and use of, services for children and their families living in regional areas.
- Youth in rural and regional areas by risk factors such as mental health, substance abuse and juvenile crime.
- Youth social networks and relationships (e.g. as a measure of social isolation).
- Better estimates of regional youth employment.
- Data on cause-of-death, in particular suicide and transport accidents.

IMPROVE THE USE OF EXISTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH DATA SETS [6]

There is concern that many existing data sets are under utilised. A wealth of data is held in administrative and survey collections with the potential to greatly enhance current research across a number of key issues. An identified need is to promote and facilitate greater access to such collections. Along with this is the need to encourage better analysis of such data and the promotion of research findings.

**IMPROVE DATA COLLECTIONS THAT ALLOW PATHWAYS TO BE
IDENTIFIED [7]**

In recent years an increasing need for longitudinal data on children and youth has been identified. Such data not only allow causal pathways and outcomes to be identified, but also enable the identification of at-risk populations. There are a number of collections in the field (e.g. LSAC; LSAY; and the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey). Also under development is LSIC. Alongside the need for an increase in the collection of longitudinal data is the need to promote the results of this research to support better policy and program development.

**KEY ISSUE SPECIFIC
NEEDS**

These data development needs relate back to specific policy concerns, and one or more areas of social concern. These data development needs have been grouped under their associated key issue.

**Childhood and maternal
health**

IMPROVE CHILDHOOD INJURY DATA [8]

- Includes data on injury circumstances and causes.
- Associated data on family circumstances, mental health and substance abuse of parents.

DEVELOP DATA ON MATERNAL HEALTH RISK FACTORS [9]

- Data on mental health of mother, substance abuse, age, body mass index and nutrition.

Childhood and maternal health continued

UPDATE AND EXPAND DATA ON CHILDREN'S NUTRITION [10]

- Includes prevalence and duration of breast-feeding.
- Current data on children's nutrition and body mass index.

UPDATE AND EXPAND DATA ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT [11]

- Need for current data relating to the social and emotional development of children.
- Data on an expanded range of mental health and behavioural problems, including risk and protective factors for children's mental health.

DEVELOP DATA ON MEASURES OF CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY [12]

- Data required on type, frequency, duration and intensity of exercise.

The abuse and neglect of children

IMPROVE AND EXPAND DATA ON THE PREVALENCE OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN [13]

- Data on prevalence of abuse and neglect required, including data on unreported abuse and neglect.

DEVELOP DATA ON OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ABUSE AND NEGLECT [14]

- Longitudinal data on outcomes for children experiencing abuse and neglect.
- Service provision and its impact on the outcomes of those experiencing abuse and neglect.
- Linked data to trace victims through welfare system.

EXPAND DOMESTIC/FAMILY VIOLENCE DATA TO INCLUDE CHILDREN [15]

- Improved domestic violence data required for all persons in households/families, especially those families which experience abuse and neglect.
- Data on the impacts and longer term outcomes for children from families who have experienced domestic/family violence.

Children's learning and development

IMPROVE DATA ON EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT AND OUTCOMES [16]

- Children's participation in formal learning and data on characteristics of those accessing and not accessing early learning opportunities.
- Longitudinal data on early learning and development outcomes, focussing on early learning activities rather than child-care.
- Data on preschool attendance rates (not just enrolment rates).

DEVELOP DATA ON PARENT'S INVOLVEMENT IN CHILD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT [17]

- Parental involvement in child's early learning and development, along with parenting style and parent's education.
- Time spent with children by each parent (where parents are separated).

Children's learning and development continued

DEVELOP MEASURES OF CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

ATTENDANCE/NON-ATTENDANCE [18]

- Rates of attendance/non-attendance (not just enrolment) in compulsory education, collecting characteristics of those not attending.
- Related factors including truancy, bullying (including non reported bullying) and school violence (including for ethnic groups).

DEVELOP DATA ON THE TRANSITION FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLING [19]

- Data on both successful and unsuccessful transitions between primary and secondary school.
- Characteristics that support successful transitions and the risk factors/barriers to successful transitions.

Youth educational attainment and participation

IMPROVE VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL TRAINING PARTICIPATION AND OUTCOMES DATA [20]

- Improved data on student pathways between school and VET.
- Characteristics and outcomes for those participating in VET and those who are not.

DEVELOP DATA ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S EDUCATION, CAREER CHOICES AND EDUCATION OUTCOMES [21]

- Characteristics of early school leavers and their reasons for leaving.
- Career choices and factors affecting choice.
- Further study intentions.
- Barriers to education.
- Achievement in education and pathways to achievement.

IMPROVE MEASURES OF EDUCATION PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE [22]

- Participation and movement across and between sectors.
- Movement of young people in and out of education.

Transitions to independent living

IMPROVE DATA ON EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS [23]

- Intergenerational transmission of employment patterns.
- Outcomes of long-term unemployment for youth.
- Identification of at-risk youth (that is those not likely to make the transition) and data on early intervention strategies and their impacts.

DEVELOP ADMINISTRATIVE DATA ON YOUTH TRANSITIONS TO INDEPENDENT LIVING [24]

- Linked data allowing the tracking of youth making transitions (across various administrative collections).
- Data on how well educational opportunities for youth meet the skill needs of the economy.
- Access to services, payments received, coordination of services and referrals between systems.

Transitions to independent living continued

IMPROVE MEASURES OF YOUTH INACTIVITY [25]

- Social inactivity including non participation in work, education and community and poor social networking.
- Factors associated with non-participation in education and employment.

DATA ON SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD [26]

- Formation of social relationships, both friendships and sexual relationships.
- Quality of relationships with family.
- Family formation and dissolution of young people
- Data on young people living in the parental home.

Social participation of youth

DEVELOP MEASURES OF YOUTH SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND MEASURES OF SOCIAL COHESION [27]

- Youth social activities.
- Access to support groups, including mentors.
- Definitions of, and data on, informal networks, including connections in the community.
- Data on negative relationships, including peer relationships.
- Barriers to social participation.

Risk behaviours

IMPROVE DATA ON YOUTH CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM [28]

- Youth re-offenders, including the influence of mental illness, substance abuse and exposure to family violence.
- Linked data between corrections and community organisations.
- Youth offenders, types of crime, contact with police and whether cautioned or action taken.

IMPROVE DATA ON OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH WHO HAVE BEEN IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM [29]

- Long term outcomes for those who have been in the juvenile justice system, especially Indigenous youth.
- Data on interventions provided to offenders in the system and their effectiveness.
- Outcomes for youth coming out of prisons.

IMPROVE DATA ON YOUNG PERSONS INJURY [30]

- Substance abuse and mental health, as it relates to injury.
- Youth exposure to violence and injury.
- Domestic violence data with young people as victims and perpetrators.
- Youth driving style and injury.

UPDATE AND EXPAND DATA ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH [31]

- Current data on mental health and well-being required, including a fuller range of mental health disorders than that available in previous surveys.
- Data on associated risk and protective factors, including substance abuse.
- Longitudinal data on those with mental health problems, particularly focussing on long-term outcomes and pathways.

*Risk behaviours
continued*

IMPROVE DATA ON MULTIPLE RISK FACTORS [32]

- Data on youth exhibiting multiple risk factors including alcohol consumption, diet, exercise, drug use, mental health problems and smoking.
- Related socio-demographic data.

IMPROVE DATA ON YOUTH REPRODUCTION AND SEXUAL HEALTH [33]

- Teenage pregnancy, fertility and abortion.
- Data on sexually transmitted infections, sexual health and links to other risk behaviours.

IMPROVE DATA ON YOUTH NUTRITION [34]

- Current data on diet for youth, including over eating, under eating, associated risk factors and health status.
- Current prevalence of overweight and obesity among youth.
- Outcomes of dietary habits on health and well-being.

IMPROVE MEASURES OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR YOUTH [35]

- Current data on type, duration, intensity and frequency of physical activity.

Draft

OVERVIEW OF DATA DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

The tables to follow later in this chapter contain a comprehensive descriptive list of the wide range of data development actions already occurring which will assist in addressing the data development needs. A summary of the major data development actions currently being undertaken by stakeholders in the field is provided first.

Indicator sets for children and youth have been evident for some time now. There have been recent important national sets released such as AIHW's *A Picture of Australia's Children* and several state based indicator sets such as *Best Start* in Victoria and *Families First* in New South Wales. Several publications released as part of the ABS's on-going social statistics program have contained indicators for children and youth. These publications include: the annual *Australian Social Trends*; the 2001 Census publication *Australia's Youth 2001*; and *Education and Training Indicators, Australia 2002*. A number of new indicator sets are also under development including: the *National Headline Indicators Project* with pilot work being undertaken by the Victorian Department of Human Services, on behalf of the Australian Health Minister's Advisory Council; and AIHW's *Young Australians: Their Health and Wellbeing*.

Some of the data comparability issues across the children and youth field are being addressed through a series of initiatives including the development of national minimum data sets. National minimum data sets for Children's Services, Child Protection and Support Services, and Juvenile Justice are being worked on by AIHW. The ABS is also undertaking major work in relation to developing statistical standards across several of its collections, with the most important being the Census of Population and Housing. State and territory based collections such as the health computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) surveys are also being made more comparable.

Significant data development is also being undertaken to enhance the range and quality of data available for often small but important children and youth target population groups. Initiatives in this area include those by AIHW and the ABS to improve Indigenous data across numerous collections and several state specific activities such as those being undertaken by ICHR in Western Australia. Other important data development activities in this area include those to improve data relating to children and youth with disabilities, those facing socioeconomic disadvantage and those who are geographically isolated.

While there is already a wealth of data available on children and youth much activity is being directed to improve the quality and accessibility of existing data sets. The National Data Network (NDN) is one such activity, as are the indicator sets mentioned above, which make use of existing sources of information. The NDN is a library of data holdings which has been created to facilitate better access for researchers and policy makers to the wealth of data already held by many organisations. At the state and territory level

OVERVIEW OF DATA
DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS
continued

there is much work being undertaken by agencies to improve their survey and administration data collections.

The important issues of understanding a child's or young person's social and emotional development as well as education and employment pathways are being addressed through the introduction of several longitudinal collections. These include the planned LSIC and the Trans-generational Data Set by FaCS, among others. These will augment more established longitudinal data sets such as ACER's LSAY and the more recent Household Income and Labour Dynamics Australia survey by FACS/Melbourne Institute and FaCS/AIFS' LSAC.

DATA DEVELOPMENT
ACTIONS

The tables in this chapter present descriptions of the data development actions and the lead agency responsible for them. An action status is also included and is defined as follows—

Underway: action is underway and progress is in line with objectives.

Some development required: some work is occurring and agreement and commitment to the action have been reached. There may be a need for greater input, redirection of effort, or increased resources.

Significant work required: little or no work has commenced and/or the action is not clearly defined.

Data development actions are grouped according to their relevance to individual cross-cutting data development needs or to needs applicable to a specific key issue. For each group of data development actions, an assessment of how well the actions are meeting data development needs is presented. This assessment also highlights the areas of development need where gaps in the information base and development action, are evident. It is anticipated that where gaps exist, new data development actions will be proposed to address them. In some cases, a working group could be established to examine the issue and determine the most appropriate course of action.

ACTIONS TO MEET THE CROSS-CUTTING DATA DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

IMPROVING AGENCY COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION ACROSS THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FIELD IN RELATION TO DATA ACTIVITIES [cross-cutting data development need 1]

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
<p>Early Childhood Education Indicators</p> <p>A range of nationally consistent early childhood education indicators is being developed to address the availability of quality statistics on early childhood education. An interdepartmental advisory group, comprising representatives of national and state education departments, has been providing guidance and direction to the project. The indicators are being compiled from current measures and available data. Assessment of fitness for purpose of indicators is a key part of the project. The project will also address gaps in early childhood education needs. The education related priorities identified in this Plan will be considered in this project.</p>	Some development needed	ABS
<p>Headline Child Health and Well-being Indicators</p> <p>A project to develop a national set of headline indicators has been commissioned under the Child Health and Well-being Reform Initiative arising from the Australian Health Ministers' Reform Agenda. This project will provide a set of indicators to monitor the health, development and well-being of Australia's children, for use across the field. Underpinning processes to facilitate data collection, analysis and reporting will also be explored.</p>	Some development required	Victorian Department of Human Services, for AHMAC
<p>Young Australians: Their Health & Well-being</p> <p>The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare are developing a companion report to <i>A Picture of Australia's Children</i> but based on youth indicators of health and well-being. An interdepartmental advisory group has been established and the form and content of the report is being considered and developed.</p>	Underway	AIHW

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- The above actions represent strong examples of agency collaboration already happening in the field of children and youth.
- Ongoing effort is necessary to identify areas of data development work where collaboration should be promoted and adopted by the agencies with similar interests and responsibilities in particular data development.

DEVELOPING AND PROMULGATING THE USE OF STANDARDS AND CONCEPTS RELATING TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH [cross-cutting data development need 3]

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
-------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------

National Criminal Courts Data Dictionary

Underway

ABS

The first version of this dictionary was released in October 2005. It is a reference document which defines national data items and outlines methods for the use of 27 data elements and concepts that underpin the ABS' and Council of Australian Governments (COAG) criminal courts collections. It is intended that through website dissemination the data dictionary will be available as a resource to agencies who are seeking to align their statistical output with the ABS and COAG criminal court collections.

Framework for family statistics

Significant work required

ABS

Development of a framework for family statistics.

Children and youth: standard definitions

Significant work required

ABS

Development of agreed standard definitions for children and youth in national statistical collections including the production of data dictionaries. Priority areas for the development and uptake of standard age definitions include —

- health risk factors
- child protection collections
- crime and justice collections.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- Further work will be required to examine the specific collections or data sources where standard definitions and concepts are not currently being used and determine potential action to be taken.

IMPROVING THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF DATA ON SPECIFIC TARGET POPULATIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH [cross-cutting data development need 4]

Includes—

- Indigenous children and youth
- Children and youth with disabilities
- Culturally and linguistically diverse children and youth
- Socio-economically disadvantaged children and youth

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
<p>Child-centred disadvantaged index</p> <p>The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling is developing a child-centred form of a socio-economic index for areas, to be applied at the Statistical Local Area (SLA) level. When completed in 2006, this index will identify areas where disadvantaged children are living in Australia, and will also provide extensive information about the family characteristics of children living within each SLA (e.g. percentage living in a family where no parent has a job or a post-school qualification). It is hoped that this data, with information on child health status collected from other sources, will provide additional insights into the links between socio-economic status, child health and service usage at the SLA level.</p>	Underway	NATSEM
<p>Northern Territory children's health survey</p> <p>The NT Department of Health and Community Services and the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training are working together on the first health and well-being survey of Northern Territory children. In 2004 12,000 Territory households were contacted and for just over 1,000 children aged from birth to 12 years data was collected on them from a parent or principal carer. A first report is to be released in early 2006, with three more reports to follow.</p>	Underway	DHCS and NT DEET
<p>Indigenous synthetic estimates</p> <p>The Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and the ABS are investigating the feasibility of producing a set of synthetic estimates of health and social characteristics for the Indigenous child populations of the Northern Territory and Queensland. These estimates are to be based on data from the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey.</p>	Some development required	ICHR and ABS
<p>National Pre-school Census— Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and All Students</p> <p>This census annually collects details of enrolments from a census of pre schools nationally. The collection will be expanded to collect information about non-Indigenous students (sex and age) and more detail about staffing.</p>	Underway	DEST

Continued overleaf ...

IMPROVING THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF DATA ON SPECIFIC TARGET POPULATIONS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH [cross-cutting data development need 4] continued....

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
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Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey

Underway

ICHR

A population based random sample of 5,300 Indigenous children under the age of 18 years living in 2000 families in Western Australia. To date, data and analysis has been released on social, emotional and physical well-being. Forthcoming is data and analysis on education, family, community and justice. For many of these areas data is cross-classified by levels of geographical isolation, adding to the range of small area data on Indigenous children in WA.

Census of Population and Housing 2006: disability question module

Underway

ABS

The 2006 Census of Population and Housing will incorporate a new disability related question module on 'core activity need for assistance'. Estimates of children with a core activity need for assistance, based upon this new question set, will be available for smaller areas than those from the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers and will be relatable to those children with a core activity limitation in the survey.

Census of Population and Housing 2006: enhanced Indigenous children and youth population coverage

Underway

ABS

The 2006 Census of Population and Housing will again feature a specific Indigenous Enumeration Strategy aimed at improving the Indigenous counts and quality of the characteristics data. The 2006 Census results will also form the foundation for the next set of Indigenous population estimates and projections.

Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

Significant work required

ABS

The next survey is planned for 2009. A review of the survey will be conducted in 2006-7 and will involve consultation with users on survey content.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- Actions noted above will go some way toward achieving improvements for some target populations.
- Further work to examine the deficiencies in data supply for each target population and determine potential new data development actions is required.

IMPROVING THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF SMALL AREA DATA AVAILABLE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH [cross-cutting data development need 5]

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
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Census of Population and Housing 2006: small area data	Underway	ABS
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The 2006 Census of Population and Housing will allow for improved small area data on some smaller population groups, most notably Indigenous children and children with a disability.

Introduction of mesh blocks for 2006 Census of Population and Housing	Underway	ABS
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Mesh blocks are a new spatial unit for releasing census, survey and administrative data. They contain around 30–60 dwellings and can be aggregated to many different levels of geographic boundaries. From the 2006 Census of Population and Housing onwards, this will allow for greater flexibility in the output of small area census data relating to children and youth, including output compiled according to various administrative boundaries and, potentially, community level data. It is envisaged that mesh blocks will replace census Collection Districts as the base level spatial unit for census data.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- Actions noted above will go some way toward achieving improvements in the range and quality of small area data currently available for children and youth.
- Further work to examine the existing deficiencies in small area data sources and determine potential for new data development actions is required.

IMPROVING THE USE OF EXISTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH DATA SETS [cross-cutting data development need 6]

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
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a. National Data Network	Underway	ABS
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The National Data Network (NDN) will provide a library of data holdings relevant to policy analysis and research. The Network will consist of the NDN Central node (located at the ABS) linking to NDN Nodes located on servers at individual external data custodians' servers. A Node is essentially a library of meta-data about each data custodian's data holdings. These data holdings remain within, and controlled by, the custodian organisations.

The Telethon Institute of Child Health Research will be the first custodian of Children and Youth data to host a node (expected to be live in early 2006). This node will provide access to users about meta-data on data collections managed by the Institute, as well as access to the Institute's publicly available data. In the future, the node may be shared by other custodians of children and youth data who do not have the capacity to host a node of their own.

b. Remote Access Data Laboratory	Underway	ABS
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This is a secure online data query service that approved clients can access via the ABS web site. Authorised users can use the Remote Access Data Laboratory to access Confidentialised Unit Record Files stored within the ABS environment. The storing of Confidentialised Unit Record Files within the ABS environment, rather than distributing on CD-ROM, allows for a higher level of detail to be made available, improving research potential.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- Promotion of the above actions among the user community should result in improvements in the use of existing data sets for children and youth.
- Further work should be undertaken to determine ways of promulgating the wealth of data already available about children and youth.

IMPROVING DATA COLLECTIONS THAT ALLOW PATHWAYS TO BE IDENTIFIED [cross-cutting data development need 7] *continued...*

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
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Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

	Underway	ACER
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This project studies the progress of several groups of young Australians as they move from school into post-secondary education and work. The project is currently following three cohorts: a group of young people who were in Year 9 in 1995; a group of young people who were in Year 9 in 1998; and a group of young people who turned 15 years of age in 2003 and participated in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment 2003.

Since 1995, annual surveys provide information on what young Australians are doing and how they manage the many transitions they make after school. More detailed investigations include school achievement and school completion, participation in vocational and university education, gaining and maintaining employment, and household and family formation.

Statistical Longitudinal Census of Population and Housing Data Set

	Significant work required	ABS
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The Census of Population and Housing will be made more useful to future researchers with the establishment of a longitudinal data set based on a five per cent sample of the Census. The sample will provide a rich data set for addressing issues affecting mainstream Australia. Additional data sets may be used in conjunction with the sample. The first longitudinal view of the sample will not be available until after the 2011 Census has been processed.

Trans-generational Data Set

	Some development required	FaCS
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This data set is based on administrative data on income support from Centrelink. It will contain key demographic characteristics for a selected cohort of young persons and their parents/carers and detailed history of their income support. Results from this study will be utilised by the longitudinal study *Inter-generational Transmission of Disadvantage: Patterns, Causation and Implications for Australian Social Policy*.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- The above noted actions will generate a range of new and improved data on pathways for children and youth.
- Further work is required to determine if significant gaps in the available (or future) data remain, given the actions above, and if so, to determine potential actions.

ACTIONS TO MEET THE KEY ISSUE SPECIFIC DATA DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

TO EXPAND AND UPDATE DATA ON CHILDHOOD AND MATERNAL HEALTH [data development needs 8–12]

Includes—

Improving childhood injury data

Developing data on maternal health risk factors

Updating and expanding data on children's nutrition

Updating and expanding data on children's mental health and social/emotional development

Developing data on measures of children's physical activity

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
<p>State CATI health surveys: injury module</p> <p>The Strategic Injury Prevention Partnership is currently working with the Computer Assisted Telephone Interview Technical Reference Group (which reports to the National Public Health Information Working Group) to include 20 questions relating to injury in state household surveys.</p>	Some development required	SIPP and CATI TRG
<p>ICD–10: Review of injury classifications</p> <p>The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's National Injury Surveillance Unit is seeking to have amendments made to the fifth edition of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD–10–AM). The amendments relate to Chapter XIX—Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes, and Chapter XX—External causes of morbidity and mortality. These amendments would support better coding of injury data.</p>	Some development required	AIHW
<p>Review of the ABS National Health Survey</p> <p>Feasibility of including measured height and weight for children in the ABS' National Health Surveys is being examined.</p>	Significant work required	ABS
<p>National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey</p> <p>The primary purpose of the survey is to collect detailed information about food and nutrient intakes, physical activity levels and physical measurements such as height and weight among children and adolescents. It is also intended that the survey provide comparable data with earlier nutrition surveys involving children that were conducted in 1985 and 1995. The survey is currently being developed.</p>	Some development required	DoHA
<p>National Nutrition Surveillance System</p> <p>The Department of Health and Ageing, on behalf of the National Public Health Partnership's Nutrition Working Group, the Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance (SIGNAL), has commissioned a contractor to develop a framework and business case for an ongoing national food and nutrition monitoring and surveillance system in Australia. At this point there is no identified national resource that could be put to implementing the outcomes of this process.</p>	Significant work required	DoHA and SIGNAL
<p>Australian Early Development Index</p> <p>This index collects information on the physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication skills and general knowledge of children. This community level based measure of children's development is currently in 60 communities across Australia. It is expected that by 2007 over 420 schools will have been involved.</p>	Underway	CCCH and ICHR

Continued overleaf ...

TO EXPAND AND UPDATE DATA ON CHILDHOOD AND MATERNAL HEALTH [data development needs 8–12] continued ...

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
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National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being, 2007

Significant work required	ABS
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This ABS survey will collect information on the prevalence of selected mental disorders, the level of disability associated with each, the use of health services, and level of help needed as a result of a mental health problem. It is expected that the survey will collect data for the population aged 16 years and over. Women with dependent children will be identified.

Other relevant actions presented under cross-cutting needs

Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- Actions are in place to address information needs related to children’s physical activity, nutrition and injury.
- While actions were identified that will develop data on maternal risk factors, additional action is needed to improve data on associated risk-factors such as substance abuse and mental health.
- While the AEDI will provide data at a community-level on the social/emotional development of young children, no actions have been identified that will provide updated and expanded person-level data on a range of mental health issues.



TO DEVELOP AND EXPAND DATA ON THE ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN [data development needs 13–15]

Includes—

- Improving and expanding data on the prevalence of abuse and neglect of children
- Developing data on outcomes for children who have experienced abuse and neglect
- Expanding domestic/family violence data to include children

*Data development actions (current and planned)**Status of actions**Lead agency***National Data Collection on Child Protection**

Underway

NCPASS and AIHW

The National Child Protection and Support Services data group is undertaking work to broaden the scope of the national data collection on child protection and to improve comparability across jurisdictions, including the development of data dictionaries and a move towards the provision of data in unit record format.

Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect in Australia

Significant work required

NAPCAN

The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect is proposing a study to measure the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in Australia. The study would begin in 2008. A source of funding is being sought and partnerships will be considered.

Personal Safety Survey, 2005

Underway

ABS

The 2005 collection of the ABS Personal Safety Survey included both men and women (previously only women were surveyed). It included questions on experience of physical and sexual abuse as a child and also socio-demographic information. Data is expected to be released in mid 2006.

Domestic/family violence indicators in police administration collections

Significant work required

ABS

A feasibility study is being conducted to identify what indicators of domestic/family violence are currently collected by police and how these could be integrated throughout the crime and justice sectors.

Improve domestic/family violence data

Some development required

ABS and PSG

The Police Statisticians Group (PSG) in conjunction with the ABS' National Crime Statistics Unit and relevant other parties continue to improve data in relation to family and domestic violence, including improvements to the quality of the Relationship of Offender to Victim indicator.

Continued overleaf ...

TO DEVELOP AND EXPAND DATA ON THE ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN [data development needs 13–15] continued ...

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
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Domestic violence data working group

Significant work required	ABS
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A working group will be formed to consider issues and develop proposals concerning:

- definitions relating to family and domestic violence
- scope of family violence statistical requirements
- measurement issues
- and data sources.

Other relevant actions presented under cross-cutting needs

Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- A number of initiatives are in place to improve data on the prevalence of child abuse and neglect, both in administrative and survey collections.
- Still to be addressed is the collection of data on the outcomes for children and youth who have experienced abuse and neglect. In addition, data development actions are still required to address needs related to service and welfare provision for those experiencing abuse and neglect.
- Efforts to make improvements to domestic/family violence data appear to be under control with a number of actions in place to improve the identification of children in administrative collections in this area.

TO IMPROVE AND DEVELOP DATA ON CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT [data development needs 16–19]

Includes—

- Improving data on early childhood learning, development and outcomes
- Developing data on parent's involvement in child learning and development
- Developing measures of children's education attendance/non-attendance
- Developing data on the transition from primary and secondary schooling

Data development actions (current and planned)

Early Years Learning Survey

An Early Years Learning Survey is planned for 2008. It will be included on the ABS Household Survey Program as an adjunct to the Child Care Survey. Topics will include parental involvement in learning, attendance and non-attendance in formal, non-formal and in-formal early learning activities.

Time Use Survey, 2006

Will collect data on parents' time spent with children, including time spent playing with, reading to, teaching and reprimanding children.

Student attendance measures

The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs' Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce has reviewed current student attendance data and further development of nationally consistent attendance measures is now being considered.

Other relevant actions presented under cross-cutting needs

Early Childhood Education Indicators

See reference under cross-cutting need 1.

Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

Status of actions

Lead agency

Significant work required

ABS

Underway

ABS

Underway

PMRT

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- A number of initiatives are in place to collect data on early childhood learning and education, however additional actions are required to address data needs related to the transition from primary to secondary school, in particular focusing on the social aspects of this transition.
- Some work has been undertaken to address inadequacies in student attendance measures, however additional actions are needed to collect data on the factors contributing to non-attendance, including socio-demographic data.

TO IMPROVE AND DEVELOP DATA ON YOUTH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND PARTICIPATION [data development needs 20–22]

Includes—

- Improving vocational and education training participation and outcomes data
- Developing data on young people’s education, career choices and education outcomes
- Improving measures of education participation of young people

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
<p>Consistent information across jurisdictions on VET in the school system</p> <p>The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs has agreed to a series of recommendations that will bring about: improved systems to manage the data collection process; and a new collection from 2005, which will align with the Australian VET Management Information Statistical Standard. From 2005, the <i>National Report on Schooling in Australia</i> will report against agreed key performance measures for VET in schools.</p>	Underway	MCEETYA and NCVET
<p>Down-the-Track Survey</p> <p>At the July 2003 National Training Statistics Committee meeting a proposal for a longitudinal survey received general support. Following on from this, conduct of the national Down the Track Survey was completed in September 2004. The scope of the survey includes 15-24 year old graduates and module completers who completed the 2002 Student Outcomes Survey. A detailed research project is due for completion in early 2006.</p>	Underway	NCVER and ABS
<p>Mapping the Future: A Forward Plan for Australian Vocational Education and Training Statistics 2004 – 2010</p> <p>The report outlines three areas of change for the National VET statistics program, along with 23 proposals for collections and surveys managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. These are to bring about an extended scope of the information base to include nationally recognised training; linkage between data sets; and widened access and use of VET statistics.</p>	Underway	DEST and NCVET
<p>Stepping Stones? Learning pathways within and beyond VET for young people</p> <p>Analytical and data collection project to identify pathways available to, and used by, young people.</p>	Underway	NCVER
<p>Time Use Survey, 2006</p> <p>Will collect data on time spent on education activities.</p>	Underway	ABS
<p>Structured Workplace Learning</p> <p>The Department of Education, Science and Training is preparing to collect a range of new data related to Structured Workplace Learning, provision of careers advice to students and general provision of careers advice from industry to students from 2006, as part of the monitoring of the Australian Network of Industry Career Advisers initiative.</p>	Some development required	DEST
<p>Attainment indicators endorsed by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs</p> <p>Indicators have been introduced to the Ministerial Council's <i>National Report on Schooling in Australia</i>, as well as the <i>Report on Government Services</i>. These measures are to be reported at the national level each year compared to the previous year and at the state/territory level for each year compared to the five years previous.</p>	Underway	ABS and PMRT

Continued overleaf ...

TO IMPROVE AND DEVELOP DATA ON YOUTH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND PARTICIPATION [data development needs 20–22]
continued ...

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
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Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey, 2006

Underway

ABS

This survey is part of the second round of international testing of adult literacy. The survey will provide a comprehensive set of comparative indicators of lifeskills and their distribution in each participating country. The 2006 survey will collect data on literacy and its relationship to education attainment, participation in -formal, non-formal and in-formal learning, reasons for participation, non-completion of qualifications, labour force participation and barriers to education and training. The survey will cover a sample of persons aged 15–74 in all states and territories.

Skills and Qualifications Profile

Underway

ABS

The ABS' National Education and Training Statistics Unit is undertaking a project to develop a set of indicators to provide information about the skills and qualifications profile of the population. Where possible, indicators will also be developed for sub-populations of interest, including Indigenous students, 15–19 year olds and 15–29 year olds. The project will assist the understanding of available indicators and will provide recommendations to users about further indicators of skills and qualifications.

Improve information on enrolments in private higher education

Underway

DEST

A pilot collection of data from a limited set of enrolment information from non-government funded higher education institutions was undertaken in 2004, with a view to full introduction of the collection in the future. The Department of Education, Science and Training is considering options for the future collection of this data.

Improvements to Apparent Retention (to Year 12) Rates

Underway

ABS

The ABS' National Education and Training Statistics Unit held a workshop of relevant stakeholders in September 2005 to advance work on adjustments to apparent retention (to Year 12) rates and set priorities for further development of alternative/complementary measures of participation, engagement and attainment.

In addition, an article will be published in *Schools, Australia* (cat. no. 4221.0) discussing a range of possible adjustments to apparent retention rates and reviewing and providing advice on a suite of complementary or alternative measures. This is expected to be released in early 2006.

National Schools Statistics Collection

Underway

ABS

Currently school participation rates for full-time students are produced. Efforts are in place to obtain ages for part-time students which would enable participation rates for all students to be derived.

Adult Learning Survey, 2006–07
Some development
required

ABS

This survey will measure data on participation in all types of learning. It will be designed to provide data in line with the international requirements of the Adult Education Survey, and will focus on those who have completed their initial education.

Continued overleaf ...

TO IMPROVE AND DEVELOP DATA ON YOUTH EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND PARTICIPATION [data development needs 20–22]

continued ...

Other relevant actions presented under cross-cutting needs

Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- Data development actions are underway to address the data development needs identified under this key issue. Actions will need to be monitored to ensure that data needs are indeed met and that no additional data development actions are required.

Draft

TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE DATA ON THE TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING [data development needs 23–26]

Includes—

- Improving data on educational and employment pathways
- Developing administrative data on youth transitions to independent living
- Improving measures of youth inactivity
- Developing data on social aspects of the transition to adulthood

*Data development actions (current and planned)**Status of actions**Lead agency***Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey**

Underway

FaCS and the
Melbourne Institute

Wave 4 of this national longitudinal survey contains a module on youth issues. Questions cover aspirations and life satisfaction, as well as employment and housing intentions. Data is due for release in early 2006.

Time Use Survey, 2006

Underway

ABS

Will collect data on patterns of socialising along with data on participation in culture and leisure activities.

Family Transitions and History Survey, 2006–07Some development
required

ABS

Key variables relating to people aged 18–34 years expected to be collected include: whether has left home; number of times left home; age when first left home; age when first returned home; living arrangements when first left home; main reason left home the first time; main reason returned home the last time; main reason has not left home.

*Other relevant actions presented under cross-cutting needs***Inter-generational Transmission of Disadvantage: Patterns, Causation and Implications for Australian Social Policy**

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

Trans-generational Data Set

See reference under cross-cutting need 7.

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- A number of data development actions are in place to improve the data available on the social aspects related to this key issue, e.g. the transition out of the family home. Actions are also in place to make better use of administrative data.
- Actions are required to address data needs on educational and employment pathways, in particular long-term outcomes, and youth social inactivity.

DEVELOP MEASURES OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH [data development need 27]

Includes—

Developing measures of youth social participation and measures of social cohesion

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
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Survey of Voluntary Work, 2006

Underway

ABS

For persons aged 18 years and over the information collected includes rates of participation in voluntary work, characteristics of people who volunteer, the types of organisations they work for, and the activities they under take.

Time Use Survey, 2006

Underway

ABS

The survey will collect data on the patterns of socialising, along with data on participation in culture and leisure activities.

General Social Survey, 2006

Some development required

ABS

The survey will collect data on family relationships and engagement with wider social networks, personal safety and security, cultural and recreational activities and voluntary work for those aged 18 and over.

Other relevant actions presented under cross-cutting needs

None identified

How well do the current data development actions meet the needs identified?

- While the above surveys provide data on a range of aspects relevant to social participation, actions are required to address the data needs related to social cohesion, barriers to social participation and negative social participation.
- Related to the above, further work needs to be undertaken to define the concepts of informal networks and negative social participation, from a youth perspective.

TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND DATA ON RISK BEHAVIOURS [data development needs 28–35]

Includes—

- Improving data on youth contact with the justice system
- Improving data on outcomes for youth who have been in the juvenile justice system
- Improving data on young person's injury
- Updating and expanding data on youth mental health
- Improving data on multiple risk factors
- Improving data on youth reproduction and sexual health
- Improving data on youth nutrition
- Improving measures of physical activity for youth

<i>Data development actions (current and planned)</i>	<i>Status of actions</i>	<i>Lead agency</i>
<p>Juvenile justice statistics</p> <p>The ABS' National Crime Statistics Unit is developing offender based statistics that will include publication of data on juveniles who come to the attention of police. The collection is based on all alleged person offenders initially proceeded against where an alleged offender, aged 10 years and over, is proceeded against and recorded by police. It includes all court proceedings and all non-court proceedings, except non-court proceedings for traffic offences. Initially proceeded against refers to a court or non-court action taken by police against a person to finalise an investigation into an alleged offence, but does not include changes in proceedings over time.</p>	Underway	ABS
<p>Criminal courts framework</p> <p>The ABS' National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit has developed a framework to expand national criminal courts collection to include Children's Courts, and expects to publish experimental data in the 2004–05 issue of <i>Criminal Courts, Australia</i>.</p>	Underway	ABS
<p>Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey</p> <p>A population based random sample of 5,300 Indigenous children under the age of 18 years living in 2000 families in Western Australia. It is proposed that volume five of output from the survey will present data and analysis on justice issues. This will include data on children who have come into contact with the justice system and will investigate the impacts of this on both the child and their family.</p>	Some development required	ICHR
<p>ICD-10: review injury classification</p> <p>The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's National Injury Surveillance Unit is seeking to have amendments made to the fifth edition of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10-AM). The amendments relate to Chapter XIX—Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes, and Chapter XX—External causes of morbidity and mortality. These amendments would support better coding of injury data.</p>	Some development required	AIHW
<p>National Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Plan 2004–2014</p> <p>The plan reports on existing data pertinent to injury control. It will discuss developing, improving and maintaining data sources and surveillance techniques to enable more effective injury control. It will also be used to engage with other groups and individuals in ways necessary for effective injury surveillance.</p>	Underway	DoHA
<p>National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being, 2007</p> <p>This survey will collect information on the prevalence of selected mental disorders, the level of disability associated with each, the use of health services, and level of help needed as a result of a mental health problem. It is expected that the survey will collect data for the population aged 16 years and over.</p>	Significant work required	ABS

Continued overleaf ...

ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AHMAC	Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council
AIC	Australian Institute of Criminology
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ARACY	Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CATI	computer assisted telephone interviewing
CATI TRG	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing Technical Reference Group
CCCH	Centre for Community Child Health
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CYSAG	Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group
DEST	Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training
DEWR	Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DHCS	Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services
DoHA	Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
FaCS	Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services
ICHR	Telethon Institute for Child Health Research
IDP	Information Development Plan
LSAC	Growing Up in Australia: The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
LSAY	Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth
LSIC	Footprints in Time - The Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NAPCAN	National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
NATSEM	National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling, University of Canberra
NCPASS	National Child Protection and Support Services data group
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NCYSU	National Children and Youth Statistics Unit
NISU	National Injury Surveillance Unit
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NT DEET	Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training
PMRT	Performance Measurement and Reporting Taskforce
Qld	Queensland
SIGNAL	Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance
SIPP	Strategic Injury Prevention Partnership
SPEAR	Social Policy Evaluation Analysis and Research
Tas.	Tasmania
VET	vocational education and training

Vic. Victoria
WA Western Australia

Draft

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