Data quality statement

Birthplace of deceased in the NCIS

The NCIS contains two fields which indicate the birthplace of a deceased.

These are:

- *Country of birth (Coronial)* – part of the NCIS core data set provided by the Coroners Courts in each Australian jurisdiction.
- *Place of birth (BDM)* – provided by the Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) registries in each Australian jurisdiction.

Why are there two data sources for birthplace in the NCIS?

Two data sources provide greater coverage and a reduced reliance on one administrative process to capture this characteristic.

In particular, having two data sources surrounding the birthplace of the deceased in the NCIS acknowledges the gaps that exist in the collection of this variable through the coronial process.

The BDM registry data will supplement the coronial data[1], and will be particularly valuable for jurisdictions with a relatively high proportion of *unlikely to be known* values in the *Country of birth (Coronial)* field.[2]

Why have the two values not been combined?

The NCIS is primarily a collection of data from the Coroners Courts about reportable deaths. It is therefore important the country of birth of the deceased as recorded by the Court remains reflected in the NCIS.

Displaying the two data sources separately also allows for some possible indications to be drawn as to the accuracy of a value. If both sources note the deceased was born in the same country, there should be a reasonable level of confidence in the accuracy of this data as it was obtained through separate processes.

[1] A comparison of birthplace data from NCIS and BDM for 2006–2015 indicated there was a BDM value for birthplace in 99% of instances where the coronial value was *unlikely to be known*

[2] An analysis of NCIS data for deaths reported between 2006–2015 found Victoria and South Australia had an *unlikely to be known* value for the *Country of Birth (Coronial)* field in 87% and 61% of closed cases respectively

What is the level of consistency between the data sources?

A comparison of coronial and BDM registry birthplace data for 2006–2015 found consistent values in 58 per cent of instances. This rose to 91 per cent when both data sets contain a meaningful value[3] and 95 per cent when equivalent countries[4] were considered a match.

What happens when the data is inconsistent?

There will be a small proportion of cases where the data contained in the coronial and BDM data sets are inconsistent. For example, coronial data indicates the deceased was born in Australia yet the BDM data states the deceased was born in New Zealand.

The NCIS Unit is not in a position to resolve these inconsistencies, as there is no way to determine which data source comprises the "correct" value. An exception to this is if the NCIS value appears to be coded incorrectly based on the attached documentation.[5]

A comparison of coronial and BDM registry birthplace data for 2006–2015 found inconsistencies in only nine per cent of cases. This reduced to six per cent when equivalent countries were removed. In these instances, NCIS users have the option to design their own rules surrounding an overall determination of birthplace.

Table 1. Comparison of coronial and BDM data sources for birthplace

Comparison item	Country of birth (Coronial)	Place of birth (BDM)
Definition	The country in which the deceased person was born	What was the country, suburb/ town/city, and state/territory of birth for the deceased?[6]
Source organisation	Coroners Court in each Australian jurisdiction	Births, Deaths and Marriage registries in each Australian jurisdiction
Variables	Based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998b). Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) Catalogue No. 1269.0. Updates have been made to this base version of the classification by the NCIS as needed, which brought it into	Based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011 2.03). Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) Catalogue No. 1269.0. Additional variables added to the above classification are:

[3] A meaningful value is defined as one in which the value is something other than *not stated*, *still enquiring*, *unlikely to be known* or *blank*

[4] Equivalent countries include instances where one data set contains a broad country category, while the other data set contains the more specific country (e.g. United Kingdom vs. England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales), or where the country listed in one dataset has since been split into one of the countries referenced in the other data set (e.g. Czechoslovakia vs. Slovakia)

[5] This scenario would involve coronial documentation attached to the NCIS clearly stating a deceased was born in a particular country, yet the *Country of birth (Coronial)* field in the NCIS does not reflect this. Users should advise the NCIS of such an issue using the *Submit data issue* link at the top right-hand corner of a case record

[6] Based on the language used on death registration forms in the states/territories of Australia

Comparison item	Country of birth (Coronial)	Place of birth (BDM)
	closer alignment with the latest version of the SACC (2016). An example of a recent update has been to replace references to *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* with *North Macedonia*	901 New South Wales 902 Victoria 903 Queensland 904 South Australia 905 Western Australia 906 Tasmania 907 Northern Territory 908 Australian Capital Territory 909 Other Territories (Ninth State) 1100 Australia (includes External Territories), nfd When the birth country is *Australia*, the BDM registries indicate the Australian state/territory of birth. For search and comparison purposes in the NCIS, these have been mapped up to the Australia country code (1101)
Coverage	All Australian states and territories	All Australian states and territories
Time span	From start of the NCIS data collection (deaths reported from July 2000 for all Australian jurisdictions except Queensland which commenced Jan 2001)	For deaths registered with BDM registries from 2006 onwards
Collection method	Collected during the death investigation process. Could be collected via: 1) the **police report of death** – several jurisdictions have a field to indicate place of birth on the police report of death to a Coroner, or it could be mentioned in the descriptive summary. 2) **statements made to the Coroner** through police briefs, witness statements or next of kin communications.	The Death Registration application form (DRF). The DRF is completed by the senior next of kin of the deceased and submitted to the BDM registry via the funeral director
Method of provision to the NCIS	Data entered into local court systems or NCIS directly by coronial clerks. Selection of country options from drop-down options	Via the Cause of Death Unit Record File (COD URF) provided by the Australian Coordinating Registry (ACR)
Frequency of provision	Nightly	Annually (as part of Cause of Death Unit Record File release)
Completeness (national level)	In a 10-year sample of coronial cases in the NCIS (2006–2015 closed cases) there were approximately 36% of	In a 10-year sample of BDM registry data (2006–2015), there were approximately 2% of cases which had a *not stated* value for place of birth

Comparison item	Country of birth (Coronial)	Place of birth (BDM)
	cases which had an *unlikely to be known* value for country of birth	
Completeness (jurisdictional level)	In a 10 year sample of coronial cases in the NCIS (2006–2015 closed cases) the proportion of cases with *unlikely to be known* for country of birth was as follows: NSW – 12% **VIC – 87%** QLD – 7% **SA – 61%** WA – 2% TAS – 0% NT – 0% ACT – 13%	In a 10 year sample of BDM registry data (2006–2015), the proportion of cases with *not stated* for place of birth was as follows: NSW – 0.5% VIC – 0.5% QLD – 1.5% SA – 0.7% WA – 0.8% TAS – 1.0% NT – 1.0% ACT – 0.5%
Accuracy	The accuracy of the information collected about country of birth is in most cases reliant on the information provided to police soon after the death has occurred. A next of kin or witnesses at the scene may be traumatised, or not know the information. The procedure a police officer or other party undertakes to determine the country of birth of a deceased is unknown and may differ in each case. The evolving nature of the composition/existence of certain countries may also have an impact on data accuracy. For example a person was said to be born in Yugoslavia. With country of birth options including *Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, *Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *Croatia*, *Macedonia*, *Montenegro*, *Serbia*, or *Slovenia* it may be problematic to accurately select the current country that encompasses the town/city of in which the person was born, or best represents the country at the time of birth	The accuracy of the information collected about a deceased's place of birth is in most cases reliant on the knowledge of the next of kin when completing the Death Registration application form. A lack of national consistency in death registration forms surrounding the question about a person's place of birth may slightly affect the accuracy of the data collected. The evolving nature of the composition/existence of certain countries as noted in the adjacent column could also influence accuracy. It is understood comparison/validation of place of birth information provided at death with place of birth information provided at other events for that same person (births, marriages) does not presently occur at BDM registries

Comparison item	Country of birth (Coronial)	Place of birth (BDM)
Quality assurance (QA) processes	The NCIS Unit reviews this data as part of its quality assurance program for cases which meet the QA criteria.[7] During the quality assurance program, the country of birth value is checked to ensure it accurately represents the information contained within the attached coronial reports	No quality assurance of the place of birth data provided by the BDM registries is undertaken by the NCIS Unit

[7] Only cases which have a non-natural case type (or are natural deaths with specific terms in the medical cause of death) are manually reviewed through the NCIS quality assurance program