



Australian Government

Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare

*Authoritative information and statistics
to promote better health and wellbeing*

Managing Disclosure Risk at AIHW

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Legislation

- AIHW is subject to:
 - Confidentiality provisions of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act, 1987 (Section 29)
 - The Privacy Act

Managing Risks

- Need to balance two competing objectives:
 - Risk of releasing confidential data and breaching relevant legislation
 - Reputation and future data provision
 - Reducing the value from our data holdings
 - Risk if we are too conservative
 - May not meet user requirements

Data products requiring disclosure risk assessment

- All unit record datasets
 - Linked data sets
 - CURFs
- Data releases with
 - lowly aggregated data
 - small cell sizes

Linked data

- AIHW is an accredited Integrating Authority
- Separation principle
 - Identifying information held separately to data
- Linked outputs use a Person-specific Project Number
 - Randomised record no.s with securely held look up list
 - No hashing/cryptographic identifiers
 - No SLK581 in researcher datasets
 - Sorted record ordering

Data releases

- AIHW non-unit record data releases come under:
“Policy on reporting to manage confidentiality and reliability”
- Formulated following the ‘Trewin’ Review

Definition of 'identifiable'

Data is identifiable if, as well as being able to identify an entity, previously unknown details are revealed.

This is referred to as the “attribute disclosure” approach.

Attribute disclosure

Table 1: Prison entrants, highest completed level of schooling, by states and territories, 2012

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	All
Year 12	45	0	58	58	10	4	6	5	186
Year 11	15	0	38	38	9	1	1	14	116
Year 10	112	0	107	107	23	16	6	25	396
Year 9	58	27	46	46	10	4	2	14	207
Year 8 or below	52	0	35	35	9	4	1	25	161
All	282	27	284	284	61	29	16	83	1,066

Consequences

- Able to release more data whilst maintaining confidentiality
- Can report on rare (interesting) cases
- Data provider's confidentiality requirements can be applied in addition
- Not as amenable to automated implementation as other approaches to confidentialisation

Concluding remarks

- Significant judgment required in devising strategies and making disclosure decisions
- Need balanced risk approach based on a full understanding of potential risks and methods for mitigating risks