



## The Application Process for Health Information (unit record data)

### Expression of interest

Researchers wanting to obtain information from the Western Australia Department of Health (DOHWA) collections or wanting to use [Data Linkage](#) services are strongly advised to discuss your requirements with the relevant Data Managers or with the Data Linkage Project Manager before applying for the data or requesting DOHWA Human Research Ethics Committee (DOHWA HREC) approval.

Consultation with the appropriate Data Managers will be arranged for you if you submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for data.

The EOI should be made on an Application for Data form. The Data Managers or Data Linkage Project Manager will ascertain whether the datasets required and the variables requested are appropriate for the purpose of the study and can give valuable guidance on issues such as the availability and quality of the data. If necessary they will discuss the feasibility of your request with you and may suggest changes.

**You do not need to complete the signature section or Confidentiality Agreements on the form when submitting an EOI. Just send an electronic copy of your application data form to:**

[DataServices@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:DataServices@health.wa.gov.au).

### Application for Data

After consultation with the relevant managers your EOI can be amended and/or completed, including all the necessary signatures and submitted as an Application for Data form.

Your Application for Data request will be formally reviewed by the appropriate Data Managers in order to provide advice to the Director General's delegate on release of the data.

If you are applying for:

- any DOHWA personal health information\* (linked or otherwise)
- the creation of new links between data sets
- Mental Health Information System data
- Birth Defects Registry data
- Geocoded information

you will require ethics approval from the DOHWA HREC.

For some categories of data, such as aggregated data or non-identifiable data extracted by using existing links, approval from an institutional HREC external to the DOHWA will be sufficient.

\* Personal health information is information or opinions that relate to the health of a person where the identity of a person is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information. For a more detailed explanation see the *Practice Code For the Use of Personal Health Information*. All project personnel who will have access to personal health information provided by the DOHWA must enter into a Confidentiality Agreement.

### DOHWA HREC approval

The application form for ethical review by the DOH HREC is available in the HREC website: (insert website). New applications must show evidence from the researchers' host institution that approval has been given to undertake the research, and that the host institution accepts legal liability for the conduct of the research project.



For assistance with completing the requirements for DOHWA HREC approval contact:

Pamela Rose  
Telephone: +61 89 222 4223  
Email: [hrec@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:hrec@health.wa.gov.au)

If the data requested is to perform health-related research involving Indigenous people, ethics approval must also be sought from the Western Australian Aboriginal Health Information and Ethics Committee (WAAHIEC). In particular, projects should be submitted to WAAHIEC if one or more of the following apply:

- Indigenous status is a key determinant;
- Data collection is explicitly directed at Indigenous peoples;
- Indigenous people, as a group, will be examined in the results;
- The information has an impact on one or more Indigenous communities; and
- Indigenous health funds are a source of funding.

### **Submission of your Application for Data where DOHWA HREC approval is required.**

Meetings of the DOHWA HREC take place on the second Wednesday in each month except January, when the Committee is in recess.

New applications must be received by the deadline for receipt of new business which is normally two weeks before the scheduled meeting.

**1** original and **14** copies of the Application for Data form and the Application for DOHWA HREC Ethics Approval form must be provided to the Executive Officer HREC by the deadline date to be considered at the next scheduled meeting. Copies of all required supporting documentation must be attached to each application.

Only the **original Confidentiality Agreement/s must be** attached to the Application for Data form. Copies are not required. Once signed by the DOHWA representative copies of signed agreements will be returned to the applicant.

Please send applications to:

HREC Executive Officer  
Information Management and Reporting  
Department of Health WA  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, C Block  
189 Royal Street  
EAST PERTH WA 6004

### **Submission of your Application for Data where DOHWA HREC approval not required.**

Submission of an Application for Data must be made in hard-copy.

If you have an application for linkable data that does not require DOHWA HREC approval (existing links with non-identifiable data) then your completed application form must be submitted with all current ethics approvals attached.

Please send applications to:

Data Services  
Information Management and Reporting  
Department of Health WA  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, C Block  
189 Royal St,  
EAST PERTH WA 6004