

National Suicide Prevention Outcomes Framework

Data Quality Framework



Australian Government



National
**Suicide
Prevention**
Office

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

The National Suicide Prevention Office (NSPO) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live, work and learn.

Recognition of lived experience

The NSPO recognises the individual and collective contributions of those with lived and living experience of suicide. People who have survived suicide attempts, cared for a person in suicidal crisis, or have lost a loved one to suicide demonstrate tremendous generosity through providing their expertise and insights. Every person's journey is unique and makes a valued contribution to Australia's commitment to suicide prevention system reform.

Recognition of contributions

The NSPO works closely with stakeholders in the development of all its work, including the National Suicide Prevention Outcomes Framework (Outcomes Framework). This includes members of the NSPO Lived Experience Partnership Group, the NSPO Advisory Board, the Jurisdictional Collaborative Forum, the Outcomes Framework Collaborative, the NSPO Scientific Advisors, sector and peak organisations, and Commonwealth portfolios. We acknowledge the work of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Manna Institute, University of New England in establishing the multi- and mixed-method approach, and the Centre for Social Research in Health and the Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales in developing the qualitative data approach. We thank all those who share their time and expertise with us so generously.

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A note on language

The way we speak about suicide and self-harm has a major influence on how the community understands and responds to people who are experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours. It also impacts on the existence and degree of stigma and shame around suicide.

While there is ongoing debate about the words used in suicide prevention, the Outcomes Framework has drawn on the insights of people with lived and living experience of suicide, evidence-informed resources, research and the knowledge of sector experts to guide the language used to describe aspects of suicide.

Sources of support

Please be aware the *Data Quality Framework* contains information about suicide that may be distressing. Please take care of yourself as you read it and ask for help if needed. Support is always available. Below are options for online and telephone information and support in Australia.

Lifeline  13 11 14  Lifeline.org.au	Suicide Call Back Service  1300 659 467  Suicidecallbackservice.org.au	Defence Member and Family Helpline  1800 624 608
MensLine Australia  1300 789 978  Mensline.org.au	ReachOut  au.reachout.com	13YARN  13YARN (13 92 76)
QLife  1800 184 527  Qlife.org.au	Kids Helpline  1800 551 800  Kidshelpline.com.au	Medicare Mental Health  Medicarementalhealth.gov.au
headspace  1800 650 890  headspace.org.au	Open Arms  1800 011 046  openarms.gov.au	Beyond Blue  1300 224 636  Beyondblue.org.au
Standby Support After Suicide  1300 727 247  standbysupport.com.au		



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Data Quality Framework

This document describes what the *Data Quality Framework* is, why it is important for the *National Suicide Prevention Outcomes Framework* (Outcomes Framework)¹ and who is responsible for using it.

Introduction

*The National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025–35*² (the Strategy) describes a national approach to suicide prevention that aims to reduce suicide deaths and attempts by preventing suicidal distress from emerging in the first place and ensuring effective supports are available to those who need them. The Strategy is supported by the Outcomes Framework, which defines key outcomes relating to suicide prevention and measures whether progress against them is being made.

The Outcomes Framework is most effective when it is underpinned by high-quality and fit-for-purpose data. Therefore, having a robust *Data Quality Framework* is critical for the Outcomes Framework and serves as a backbone for making decisions about what data is used and as a guide to what data improvements are needed.

The Outcomes Framework uses various forms of data, including both quantitative and qualitative, as well as involving primary (new) and secondary (existing) data. The *Data Quality Framework* has therefore been designed to be applicable to each of these data types. For primary data, the *Data Quality Framework* informs the methodology; and for secondary data, it is used to assess the data measures.

The Outcomes Framework has a broad scope and takes a long-term view. It is not limited to data that is available now and is applicable to a range of data sources, including some that will need to be made more fit-for-purpose over time. The *Data Quality Framework* supports the Outcomes Framework to use existing data sources wherever appropriate, as well as identify where data improvements are required as a basis for the Data Quality & Improvement Plan (component of the Outcomes Framework in development).



Purpose

This *Data Quality Framework* is a systematic approach to defining, assessing and improving the quality of data relevant to the Outcomes Framework. Its purpose can be broken down into the following key areas:

- **Reliable data.** The first step in any analysis is obtaining reliable data by ensuring the information being gathered is accurate and consistent across different sources and over time. This is especially important for the Outcomes Framework, which relies on detailed data (e.g. demographics, risk factors and intervention outcomes) to provide accurate analysis.
- **Data integrity.** This refers to the accuracy and consistency of data over its lifecycle by ensuring there are means to prevent data being corrupted as it is processed, and that data continues to reflect the true conditions of what is being measured. Having high data integrity helps to prevent the Outcomes Framework from misinterpreting data or providing misguided recommendations for improvements.
- **Trauma-informed approach.** Access to, and use of, sensitive data, particularly qualitative data, will require careful decisions about the scope and method of collection to ensure a trauma-informed approach to handling sensitive information. Where data is visible within systems or reports, the *Data Quality Framework* will support processes to ensure that information is appropriately de-identified and not re-identifiable.
- **Transparency and accountability.** Accountability is ensured through the publication of the *Data Quality Framework* (outlines how decisions are made about data), the *Outcomes Map Technical Workbook* (provides the data quality assessments for each data measure) and the Data Quality & Improvement Plan (outlines the recommended actions to improve data), and the methodology being used for the collection and analysis of data. This transparency helps stakeholders to assess all aspects of the Outcomes Framework and highlight areas for improvement.
- **Effective decision-making.** Timely access to high-quality data supports decision-makers to make informed choices about resource allocation, delivery of supports and the prioritisation of development of new suicide prevention activities. It is critical that the Outcomes Framework provides comprehensive data that reflects the actual state of progress towards achieving the outcomes so that decision-makers can make effective choices about how to ensure the greatest positive impact.
- **Continuous improvement.** The *Data Quality Framework* is not just meant to be used as a one-time inspection of data quality for the Outcomes Framework. It establishes an ongoing cycle of data review and improvement. In this way, the Outcomes Framework will continually assess and improve the quality of the data to ensure it achieves maximum positive impact for stakeholders.

Function

The function of the *Data Quality Framework* is to assess the quality and suitability of data measures for use in the Outcomes Framework. This is done by assessing data measures against several criteria that describe both the important and desired qualities for data in the Outcomes Framework.

Using criteria to make the assessment ensures each data measure is objectively and comprehensively considered against the same standards. This means the reasons for using or not using a data measure are readily available and decisions are transparent.

The criteria for the *Data Quality Framework* are outlined below and provided in detail in Appendix A.

Criteria 1 to 8 are drawn from established data governance frameworks and consider the technical aspects of data management and use. They support assessment of whether data measures are suitable for the specific suicide prevention outcomes in the Outcomes Framework.

Criterion 9 considers the quality of data measures from a broader perspective of how well they 'fit' with the aims of the Outcomes Framework and help people understand what is happening in suicide prevention. The Outcomes Framework uses this criterion as a focus for consultation with people with lived and living experience of suicide and sector stakeholders to ensure decisions about data quality and use are informed by the insights of a broader range of people than those working in data governance.

Scope

The Outcomes Framework uses a mix of primary (new) and secondary (existing) data sources. The *Data Quality Framework* is used to ensure the quality of any new data collections established for the Outcomes Framework and is applied to existing data sources being considered for inclusion.

The Outcomes Framework uses a multi- or mixed-method approach to data, including quantitative and qualitative data. The *Data Quality Framework* reflects the multi- or mixed-method approach and applies to both types of data.

The *Data Quality Framework* is used when considering whether to include potential data measures in the Outcomes Framework and to review the ongoing quality of data measures being used.



Responsibilities

The Outcomes Framework is a partnership between the following agencies and organisations:

- the National Suicide Prevention Office (NSPO) providing suicide prevention expertise and conducting consultation with people with lived and living experience of suicide and sector stakeholders
- the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) providing data governance, quantitative data expertise and qualitative data expertise through its partnership with senior qualitative research experts who deliver the qualitative data method for the Outcomes Framework.

The *Data Quality Framework* is a tool that supports collaborative decision making between all partners and includes specific responsibilities for partners based on their respective roles and expertise.

Stakeholders are encouraged to use the *Data Quality Framework* as a basis for data governance for their own data projects and to assess the robustness of the Outcomes Framework and raise areas for improvement with the NSPO and AIHW.

Development

The *Data Quality Framework* was developed by the partners involved in the Outcomes Framework. As a foundation, the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Data Quality Framework*³ and the *AIHW framework for assessing data sources for population health monitoring*⁴ were used, and additional data quality governance was provided by the AIHW.

Through partnership and consultation with the NSPO Advisory Board and Lived Experience Partnership Group, the foundational governance was adapted to ensure it was suitable for the Outcomes Framework. The adaptation was centred on ensuring the criteria reflected what was important from a suicide prevention perspective, and ensuring the criteria could be applied in a multi- or mixed-method approach and could describe the desired qualities for quantitative and qualitative data.

Application

It is important that any decision to include data measures in the Outcomes Framework is considered from both data governance and suicide prevention perspectives. Therefore, each partner uses their specialised knowledge to assess the quality of data measures against the criteria using the following categories:

- **For criteria 1 to 8**
 - **Green** – the data measure is considered to meet the specific criterion being assessed. The data measure is assessed overall as suitable for the Outcomes Framework.
 - **Amber** – there are questions about whether the data measure meets the specific criterion being assessed. There is uncertainty overall about whether the data measure is suitable for the Outcomes Framework, and the decision requires discussion and agreement between partners.
 - **Red** – the data measure is not considered to meet the specific criterion being assessed. The data measure is assessed overall as not suitable for the Outcomes Framework.
- **For criterion 9**
 - Rating 1 to 5, from least important to most important. The most frequent rating across individual assessments is used as the overall importance rating for each data measure.

Using the categories to the left supports the application of expert judgement in decisions about how a data measure meets the specific criterion and its overall suitability, while also providing a simple and accessible means to describe the assessment.

Following individual assessment, all partners contribute to a joint decision about whether to use a data measure. This includes discussion when there are divergent views on the quality of a data measure, such as when a data measure has been categorised differently by those doing the assessment. It also includes discussion to resolve uncertainty about whether to use a data measure because of identified quality limitations, such as where data measures have been categorised as amber.

It is also important that any decision is made by consensus and is transparent so that stakeholders have confidence in the Outcomes Framework. For every data measure, the assessment of the specific criterion and the overall assessment of whether to use the data measure are documented and made available to stakeholders.

Basis for Data Quality & Improvement Plan and Monitoring & Reporting Plan

The *Data Quality Framework* provides an important basis for the Data Quality & Improvement Plan and the Monitoring & Reporting Plan.

A data measure may be considered suitable and important for use in the Outcomes Framework even when quality limitations have been identified. For example, a data measure may be categorised amber for some specific criteria but green for the overall assessment. In this case, the assessment of the overall rating includes consideration of whether the data measure is rated as important to the Outcomes Framework and whether improvement actions for the specific quality limitations are identified and become part of the Data Quality & Improvement Plan.

The *Data Quality Framework* identifies any quality limitations, and the Data Quality & Improvement Plan outlines actions to

improve the quality. These improvements are monitored and reported through the Outcomes Framework's reports on the status of the Data Quality & Improvement Plan.

The Monitoring & Reporting Plan outlines a schedule of what goals, outcomes, indicators and data measures will be reported and when. It can be used by stakeholders to understand when a data measure that needs improvement will be ready to be reported, and what that data measure will be able to tell them about the goals, outcomes and indicators in the Outcomes Framework.

This process allows the Outcomes Framework and its users to not only report on data already available, but also inform data quality improvements over time and incorporate new or improved data that will be available in the future.



Appendix A

Table 1: Criteria for the National Suicide Prevention Outcomes Framework
– *Data Quality Framework*

Data Quality Framework Criteria	The quality being assessed	Description of what qualities the criterion considers	Why this is important for the Outcomes Framework	Who makes the assessment
1. Institutional environment	The data measure comes from a reputable source	The assessment considers the origin of the data collection and the arrangements under which the collection is governed and administered. This includes whether these arrangements consider ethical and safety factors, such as cultural safety and appropriateness, and how privacy and confidentiality are managed. This also includes assessing the context of the data collection, which may influence the validity, reliability or appropriateness of the data.	This criterion makes sure the Outcomes Framework only uses data from sources that have robust methods and where the data is collected and managed in safe and ethical ways. This also ensures the Outcomes Framework uses data from sources that can safely and appropriately represent different cultures and groups disproportionately impacted by suicide. This provides assurance that the data measures in the framework are not contributing to individual, community or institutional harm and helps to build and maintain social licence and trust.	AIHW Senior research experts

Data Quality Framework Criteria	The quality being assessed	Description of what qualities the criterion considers	Why this is important for the Outcomes Framework	Who makes the assessment
2. Relevance	The data measure is relevant to the construct being measured in the outcomes	The assessment considers how well the data measure relates to the constructs in the Strategy, its objectives, outcomes and indicators. It does this from both a technical perspective and a lay perspective to ensure the data measure being used is the most appropriate to measure the outcomes and meet the needs of users. It also considers the similarities and differences between data measures to understand how they uniquely add to our understanding and how they can be used to compare findings across data measures.	This criterion makes sure the Outcomes Framework uses data measures that are directly relevant to the outcomes being sought in suicide prevention. This means the Outcomes Framework will only report on what is important to measure for suicide prevention, giving it greater meaning and usefulness to people impacted by suicide or working in suicide prevention.	AIHW Senior research experts NSPO
3. Timeliness	The data measure provides the most current information to users	The assessment considers the timeliness of the data measure, i.e. how long it takes for the data to be reported after being collected, and the frequency at which the data measure is collected, such as annually or every 5 years. It also considers whether subsequent collections are scheduled and when they will happen, to understand when the data will be available in the future.	This criterion makes sure that data collected for the Outcomes Framework in the future is up-to-date and identifies when the data will be ready for use. This means the Outcomes Framework reporting will be able to report on changes over time and be as current as possible to better inform timely decisions about what needs to be improved.	AIHW Senior research experts

Data Quality Framework Criteria	The quality being assessed	Description of what qualities the criterion considers	Why this is important for the Outcomes Framework	Who makes the assessment
4. Accuracy	The data measure exactly describes the construct and population of interest	The assessment considers how exactly the data will measure the constructs in the Outcomes Framework, as well as how exactly the data provides information on any population of interest. It does this to consider how useful, meaningful and reliable the data measure is for interpretation of the Strategy and its progress. This also looks at whether a data measure that describes real-life experiences can be scaled to provide a national picture without losing its accuracy, as well as its practicality for administration. This also considers how well a data measure can be used to cross-validate and triangulate results with other data measures. Doing this is important when analysing and interpreting the findings as it increases the strength of the findings in the Outcomes Framework.	This criterion makes sure the Outcomes Framework uses data measures that are focused on measuring or helping to measure the specific questions being asked in the outcomes and indicators. This includes whether the data measures ask the right questions, in the right way and of the right people, such as groups that are disproportionately impacted by suicide. This means the Outcomes Framework reporting will accurately represent what is important to measure, thereby having greater meaning and usefulness to people impacted by suicide or working in suicide prevention. It also makes sure that the data measures in the Outcomes Framework can be used in a multi-or mixed-method approach.	AIHW Senior research experts NSPO

Data Quality Framework Criteria	The quality being assessed	Description of what qualities the criterion considers	Why this is important for the Outcomes Framework	Who makes the assessment
5. Coherence	The data measure is consistent and comparable over time	This assessment considers whether the data measure uses standard constructs with definitions that align with those used in other data sources. It also considers whether the data measure uses these definitions consistently and samples the same types of populations each time. This makes sure the data measures are comparable across administrations, and this year's findings can be compared with next year's findings. This is crucial to being able to integrate qualitative and quantitative data together in a sequential or parallel multi-or mixed-method approach.	This criterion makes sure the Outcomes Framework uses data that measures the same questions, populations and concepts each time it is collected, such as groups that are disproportionately impacted by suicide. This means the Outcomes Framework reporting is consistent, easier to understand and easier to compare over time. It also supports a collaborative approach to suicide prevention and makes sure data measures in the Outcomes Framework can be used in a multi-or mixed-method approach.	AIHW Senior research experts
6. Interpretability	The data measure ensures that reporting on the outcomes makes sense and has meaning to people	This assessment considers whether the data measure will provide findings that, when reported, are readily understandable, meaningful to people and support the interpretation of the Strategy's objectives, aims and indicators. This considers aspects such as whether it makes sense to use this data, whether the findings are easy to understand and whether they provide an easy and meaningful understanding of what is happening in suicide prevention.	This criterion makes sure the Outcomes Framework uses data that makes sense to most people, reflects people's experiences, is easy to understand and increases people's understanding of what is happening in suicide prevention. This means the Outcomes Framework is more accessible, and people and stakeholders can more readily use it to improve what they are doing.	AIHW Senior research experts NSPO

Data Quality Framework Criteria	The quality being assessed	Description of what qualities the criterion considers	Why this is important for the Outcomes Framework	Who makes the assessment
7. Accessibility	The data measure is readily available to the Outcomes Framework and its users	This assessment considers whether the data measure is readily available to users of the Outcomes Framework, as well as for the Outcomes Framework itself. It looks at the pros and cons of using the data measure as a data source, including whether the data is available through a standard or bespoke agreement, whether data needs to be requested each time, and whether data is ready to be used or needs transformation to support analysis or cleaning to reduce concerns about its sensitivity. These factors can be used to determine whether the resourcing and cost to access the data outweigh its usefulness to the Outcomes Framework.	This criterion makes sure the Outcomes Framework uses data that can be effectively acquired from sources, with limited cost, resourcing or other barriers to accessing the data regularly. This also considers whether the source data is readily and directly available to users of the Outcomes Framework. This means the Outcomes Framework sources its data carefully and makes sure its data sources are publicly available where possible, helping people to understand what is being reported and why.	AIHW Senior research experts

Data Quality Framework Criteria	The quality being assessed	Description of what qualities the criterion considers	Why this is important for the Outcomes Framework	Who makes the assessment
8. Sensitivity	The data measure can show change in the constructs and populations of interest	This assessment considers whether the data measure can identify whether a change has occurred or not. There are a range of factors that need to be considered to make sure the measure is sensitive enough but not overly sensitive, where changes in the data are considered unstable or inaccurately represent progress. These include making sure the data measure can show any change regardless of its size and direction, such as a small decrease or a large increase, and that any identified change is the result of real differences in what is being measured and is not just noise from other factors or caused by breaking things down into small groups. There is also a need to balance the high sensitivity that can come from a one-off study and the usefulness of a repeated data measure with relatively lower sensitivity.	This criterion makes sure the Outcomes Framework uses data that can measure the expected change described by the outcomes and indicators. This means the Outcomes Framework can identify meaningful changes and support people to judge how important and reliable those changes are while taking relevant contextual factors into account. This helps to produce trusted and meaningful reports on what is happening in suicide prevention.	AIHW Senior research experts

Data Quality Framework Criteria	The quality being assessed	Description of what qualities the criterion considers	Why this is important for the Outcomes Framework	Who makes the assessment
9. Importance to the Outcomes Framework	The data measure is a better 'fit' than others and can give a better sense of what is happening in suicide prevention	This assessment uses a broader perspective to assess how well the data measure supports the Outcomes Framework to achieve its purpose and intent. It considers how well the data measure 'fits' with what the Outcomes Framework is aiming to achieve, and how well the data measure helps people understand what is happening with the outcomes, indicators and suicide prevention. In cases where there may be multiple measures available, this criterion helps identify which data measure is the best possible 'fit' for the Outcomes Framework. Rating 1 through to 5, with 1 being least important and 5 being most important	This criterion makes sure the Outcomes Framework is informed by the insights of people involved in suicide prevention and reflects what matters most to them and the goals of the Outcomes Framework. It can also help with weighing up which data measure to use if several of them could be used for an indicator and ratings against every other criterion are similar. This ensures the number and relevance of data measures included in the Outcomes Framework keep it accessible and usable. It also means the Outcomes Framework stays true to its aim and reflects what is important for people to know and understand about suicide prevention in Australia.	NSPO in consultation with people with lived and living experience of suicide and sector stakeholders

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