

Australia Country Statement – Agenda Item 4

- Coverage of Australia's CRVS system is considered to be universal. As such, the targets and action areas outlined in the UN ESCAP Regional Action Framework (RAF) have largely already been met by Australia.
- In recognition that there is always room for improvement and the value in working towards a common vision and action plan across a federated system, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) led the establishment of a National Civil Registration and Statistics Improvement Committee (NCR SIC) in late 2013. This Committee - co-chaired by the ABS and one of the State/Territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages (David John from Queensland) and comprising membership of all State and Territory Registrars - has developed an action plan which provides a useful framework through which to progress improvements to Australia's CRVS in alignment with the priority areas outlined in the Regional Action Framework.
- This governance arrangement and action planning approach is in line with best practice and commended to developing countries as they work to further strengthen their CRVS systems.
- A key focus of Australia's action plan is to improve:
 - the harmonisation of births, deaths, causes of death and marriages data across the country
 - the timeliness of data sharing and access
 - the production of quality population and mortality statistics.
- The ultimate objective of this work is to better support decision making by government as well as ensuring delivery on the right to registration of an individual's birth, death and marriage.
- One area where improvements can be made in Australia is to the quality and coverage of registration of Indigenous Australians. Data from Australia's CRVS system is critical to establishing fertility and mortality rates and informing Australia's progress with closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Cause of death data and statistics are also key to informing avoidable mortality health policies and programs. The NCR SIC is in the process of developing an Indigenous Births and Deaths Data Improvement Strategy for comment by key stakeholders.
- The Brisbane Accord Group (BAG) model of providing co-ordinated support to Pacific Island Countries and Territories in a way that enables countries to lead the strengthening of their CRVS systems is commended to development partners across the region. This model reduces duplication in donor/partner effort and maximises the delivery of benefits from development investment in each country. Each action plan is country-led and country-driven, aiming to achieve a sustainable CRVS system relevant to each countries' context.
- The governance arrangements put in place to monitor progress with implementation of the Regional Action Framework should be implemented in a way that enables such sub-regional development investment strategies and minimises any duplication of effort.