

## National Communicable Diseases Data Management Meeting

The Surveillance and Management Section of the National Centre for Disease Control, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, held a National Communicable Diseases Data Management Meeting in Sydney on 17 and 18 May 2000. The aim of the meeting was to improve the quality and transfer of data to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) and the process of incorporating the expanded data collections for tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis C and foodborne diseases.

Thirty-two participants attended the meeting comprising representatives from each State and Territory health department, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, the Department of Defence, the Public Health Laboratory Network (PHLN), the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research, and the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance of Vaccine Preventable Diseases.

During the meeting, State and Territory representatives presented details of the notifiable diseases surveillance systems for their jurisdiction, field definitions, and their similarity to those proposed in the revised NNDSS data specifications. Other participants presented details of their organisations and the utilisation of national communicable diseases data. Participants also discussed the possible expanded disease data collections and some national disease-specific surveillance needs.

The outcomes of the meeting include:

- a greater working knowledge of each notifiable diseases system, with a move towards consistent definitions to feed into the revised NNDSS;
- an opportunity to address IT and data management issues which are common between States and Territories;
- the proposed development of disease detail coding protocols by PHLN;
- proposed preparation of proceedings which will include a summary of each State and Territory notifiable diseases system to be available through the Department of Health and Aged Care's Internet site; and
- a report to be prepared on the issues involved in implementing the expanded TB data collection.

A follow-up teleconference will be held in June, to finalise the recommended revised NNDSS core fields and definitions for endorsement by the Communicable Diseases Network of Australia and New Zealand.