

Enhancement of the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System's data collection

The National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS), administered from the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), has collected well over half a million disease notifications from States and Territories over the last decade. This information has been collected electronically, consolidated and reported in *Communicable Diseases Intelligence* every issue.

The electronic dataset for disease notifications has been in use since 1991 and has not been significantly updated in this time. In the past, this dataset has been more a recommendation to States and Territories rather than a rigid specification. As such, a 'best attempt' approach has been adopted in delivering the data to the Commonwealth. This has resulted in a multitude of logistical problems with interpreting, translating and consolidating notifications into a uniform dataset for analysis by epidemiological staff.

The Surveillance and Management Section at NCDC has undertaken a number of initiatives to improve the

timeliness and quality of surveillance data for analysis and dissemination.

The success of these new initiatives will depend on each State and Territory's ability to make the appropriate changes to their IT systems and revise their workflows and procedures in order to handle the changed information requirements. All of this will require consultation and adequate preparation time.

A Microsoft Word 97 document (110 k-bytes) describing the specifications for sending information to the new system can be obtained by sending an e-mail message to cdsm_nnd@health.gov.au and specifying the word 'SPECDOC' in the subject field.

Further information can be obtained by telephoning either Alison Milton on (02) 6289 8245 or Peter Mazarrol on (02) 6289 8107.

Changes to the Editorial team

As of this issue of *CDI*, February 2000, we welcome our new Editor, Angela Merianos. We look forward to Angela's input to the ongoing development of *CDI*, and

the expertise and experience Angela brings to us. Our previous Editor, Jenny Thomson, remains with us in a new role as Associate Editor. Jenny will be involved in all *CDI* issues and content related to immunisation.

Meningococcal disease workshop announcement

Meningococcal disease in Australia

Surveillance and vaccine policy — 2000 and beyond

- At the **National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance of Vaccine Preventable Diseases**, The New Children's Hospital, Westmead, New South Wales.
- 11am Friday 14th April 2000 to 3pm Saturday 15th April 2000.
- No registration fee.
- Those interested in attending this meeting should contact Kate Wyllie:

Fax: 61 2 9845 3082 or Email: katew2@nch.edu.au

to obtain a registration form and a copy of the draft program.

This meeting will consider the disease burden from meningococcal infection in Australia and the requirements for surveillance and vaccination. The meeting will provide an opportunity to compare the epidemiology of meningococcal disease in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and North America and to discuss the case for routine childhood immunisation.

Meningococcal conjugate vaccines are now developed for serogroup C and are under development for serogroups A and B. The United Kingdom introduced conjugate meningococcal C vaccines into their routine childhood schedule in late 1999.