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30 November 2020

Ms Linda Fardell
Acting General Manager
Social Statistics Division
Australian Bureau of Statistics

Dear Ms Fardell

National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing Data Integration Project Privacy Impact Assessment – Assurance Report

In June 2020, Maddocks was engaged by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (**ABS**) to provide the ABS with independent advice, review and assurance on ABS' conduct and content of the Privacy Impact Assessment for the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing data integration project (**the PIA**).

This Assurance Report is provided for the benefit of the ABS to assist it in determining the robustness of the PIA, and in considering the ongoing management of integration of the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing (**NSMHWB** or **Study**) data.

1. Findings

- 1.1 We confirm that, based on the information provided to us, the process for the PIA appears to have been undertaken consistently with the 10 steps set out in the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's (**OAIC**) *Guide to undertaking privacy impact assessments (Guide)*.
- 1.2 In particular, we note the consultation undertaken by the ABS with a range of stakeholders to inform the PIA, particularly for the assessment of actual and perceived privacy risks involved in the data integration of the Study data. The stakeholder consultation that we attended was well prepared, facilitated engagement by stakeholders, and resulted in useful information about stakeholder views in relation to privacy issues being provided to the ABS.
- 1.3 Based on the information provided to us, the analysis in the PIA report appears to be appropriate, and the best practice recommendations in the PIA report seem to us to be relevant and practical. We consider that the PIA will assist the ABS to ensure that it addresses potential privacy issues associated with integration of Study data with other ABS data assets, in particular the integration of Study data into the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (**MADIP**) and the supplementation of Study data from existing sources in MADIP.

2. Completed work

- 2.1 Our findings above are based on the following work, which was undertaken in relation to the PIA from our engagement until to the date of this Assurance Report:
 - 2.1.1 We have advised on ABS's proposed process for the PIA, including:
 - (a) reviewing and commenting on relevant documentation on 3 July 2020, including:
 - (i) NSMHWB-MADIP linkage PIA Proposal;

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- (ii) NSMHWB PIA Consultation Plan;
 - (iii) NSMHWB PIA Risk Analysis;
 - (iv) NSMHWB Reference Group membership; and
 - (v) ABS PIA Assurance Timetable initially provided in May 2020; and
- (b) advising on the consultation process on 3 July 2020 and reviewing material to be used in consultation workshops on 17 July 2020.
- 2.1.2 We have advised on ABS's proposed pre-approach material for the Study on 3 July 2020 and 4 September 2020, including commenting on a Frequently Asked Questions document on 6 October 2020 for the purposes of assisting the ABS to ensure compliance with Australian Privacy Principle (**APP**) 5.
- 2.1.3 We advised on particular issues that should be covered as part of the PIA on 3 July 2020.
- 2.1.4 We attended a stakeholder consultation workshop conducted via webinar on 28 July 2020.
- 2.1.5 We reviewed and commented on the Consultation Report prepared following the stakeholder consultation workshops on 10 September 2020.
- 2.1.6 We reviewed and commented on drafts of the PIA on 15 October 2020, 22 October 2020, 25 November 2020 and 30 November 2020.
- 2.1.7 We have discussed issues as they have arisen with ABS, including on the approach to analysing APP 6.

3. Qualifications and Assumptions

- 3.1 Our work has been limited to the scope of the PIA, as described within the PIA report (noting that the PIA is limited to consideration of the data integration aspects of the Study, and does not cover all aspects of the Study). The PIA considered MADIP processes in the context of the data integration project which was the subject of the PIA, but did not involve consideration of MADIP processes more broadly, which have been the subject of other privacy impact assessments.
- 3.2 In undertaking the above work, we have assumed that any factual matters in the PIA report are complete and accurate.
- 3.3 The analysis and findings in the PIA report are those of the ABS. While Maddocks has reviewed drafts of the PIA report and provided comments to the ABS (including on recommendations and approaches to drafting), it was a matter for ABS as to whether, or how, those comments were addressed, after consideration of all relevant matters.
- 3.4 We have not provided legal advice in relation to the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* (Cth) which is referenced in the PIA, but understand that the ABS is satisfied that this provides the necessary legislative authority for the handling of the relevant data for the purpose of the APPs.



Maddocks

Maddocks would like to thank the ABS for the opportunity to work on this matter, and on its preparedness to consider our advice and comments in relation to the PIA.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katherine Armytage".

Katherine Armytage
Partner