



Australian Government
**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

Mental Health Establishments

Skeleton Data Set

2024-25 version 4.02

The metadata for SKL 4.02 can be found on the [Online Validator metadata page](#)

As at 29 August, 2024

Table of Contents

- 1. Overview of the SKL3
 - 1.1. Changes for 2024-25.....3
 - 1.2. Principles and agreements3
 - 1.3. Comparisons5
 - 1.4. Dataset specifications (DSS).....6
- 2. Submission and validation of SKL data files 23
 - 2.1. Timelines 23
 - 2.2. File type and naming convention 23
 - 2.3. Validation 24
 - 2.4. Additional information and queries 25

1. Overview of the SKL

The data model for all mental health data sets includes a hierarchy describing the layers of mental health service delivery systems, for example, regional and organisational levels, and is an important design feature of the mental health collections. Ideally, the hierarchy reported by jurisdictions should be repeated among their various mental health data collections.

The Mental Health Information Strategy Standing Committee (MHISSC), and its National Minimum Data Set Subcommittee, agreed to a number of key principles to scrutinise the hierarchies reported in the various mental health data sets. In essence, the committees agreed to provide a 'Skeleton' of the Mental Health Establishments (MHE) National Minimum Dataset (NMDS), to be known as an SKL dataset, at the same time in the reporting cycle as the Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care NMDSs, and the National Outcomes and Casemix Collection (NOCC). This 'Skeleton' is considered the 'gold standard' against which all other mental health data files are compared, including the CMHC, RMHC, NOCC and MHE files.

The Online Validator supports the mental health collections as the vehicle for checking data submissions and provides the necessary interactive space for discussions about data issues between various stakeholders. The Online Validator has the capacity to check the hierarchy between collections, as well as identifying changes compared to previous submissions, using the comparisons with the SKL file.

The purpose of this module is to outline the layout and format of the Mental Health Establishments Skeleton (SKL) dataset to be submitted by States and Territories to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and Department of Health and Aged Care in respect of the 2024-25 year. The file is identical in structure to an MHE file, however, is limited to key components of the MHE file in order to facilitate the 'between-data set' comparisons.

1.1. Changes for 2024-25

The specific detailed changes to the 2024-25 (version 4.02) specifications, compared to 2023-24 (version 4.01) are listed below.

1.1.1. Changes to the data model

No changes to the data model have been made.

1.1.2. Changes to definitions

No changes have been made to any of the relevant definitions.

1.2. Principles and agreements

The SKL submission has been built using the following principles.

Table 1.1 Valid values for Record Type

	Decision	Notes
Timeline	December of the reporting cycle.	The supply of the MHE NMDS skeleton should occur in December of the reporting cycle, along with CMHC, RMHC and NOCC files, noting that it would be ideal to be able to supply the file earlier. The MHE Skeleton file does not have to be submitted before all other file types for the collection year. The processes comparing between files will only occur once a relevant file has been loaded. However, between file comparisons will only be made on reviewer accepted files, i.e. those that have passed stage 1 validation. When a replacement SKL file is submitted, all dependant files will be re-compared with the revised SKL automatically.
File type	MHE Skeleton file is an independent file type	This assists the processes managed by the MDS Validator. When uploading a file, there will be an option to specify if the file is a MHE Skeleton submission or a full MHE file.
File structure	Structurally equivalent to the full MHE file.	The MHE skeleton file must meet Stage 1—structural Compliance tests for any MHE file, for example, line lengths and zero filling. An appropriate set of Stage 1—Structural Checks will be undertaken on the mandatory data elements of the MHE NMDS skeleton file, including checks for malformed, duplicate, orphan, barren and miscoded records, plus missing data in mandatory fields. Importantly, failure of these rules will require resubmission of the MHE NMDS skeleton file, in accordance with existing file submission processes.
File content	The mandatory items included in the MHE NMDS skeleton include only those identifiers and attributes that permit comparison between the NMDSs.	All non-mandatory items will be blanked out with spaced during the file submission process. Note that this does not prevent jurisdictions from providing 'real' data in non-mandatory data elements when loading the file, however, blanking out this information will ensure confidentiality is maintained as part of the upload process.
Historical comparisons	An appropriate set of Stage 2—Historical Checks will be made on the entities in the MHE NMDS skeleton file, focusing on attributes that will be used for comparisons with the other data sets.	This will generate an issues list that will require jurisdictional input as per existing validation processes. Logicly is investigating the technical feasibility of automatically transferring any responses made to the issues lists at this stage across to the replacement MHE file, as per existing processes, when the 'complete MHE NMDS' file is proposed.
Parental exclusions	Issues raised at each subsequent level of analysis, starting at Regional level and progressing to Service Unit level, excludes issues related to non-matching parent entities.	This will reduce the burden on jurisdictions to respond to issues generated by problems with the parent entity. By way of example, if a region in the MHE skeleton cannot be identified in a RMHC file, issues would not be generated for any subsequent Organisations and Service Units within that region.
Attributes not considered for comparison	Entity names Entity geography	At this stage, the comparison of these attributes is not considered a high priority. This decision may be revisited in the future.
Comparison outputs	Issues list and reports.	Each non-matching entity will generate an issue in a similar way to existing issue list generation. A summary 'Validation MHE Comparison Report' will be developed to supplement the existing reports for each of the MHE, CMHC, RMHC and NOCC report views.

1.3. Comparisons

The following comparisons between the SKL and other data sets are made in the Online Validator. Comparisons between data sets are made only on those entities that are logical to compare. For example, an organisation in the SKL may only have admitted and ambulatory services. In this case, a check for the existence of a service unit between the SKL and the RMHC file would not be logical.

1.3.1. Region and organisation level comparisons

Regional and organisation entity matching is considered a minimum requirement, regardless of the collections being compared.

1.3.2. SKL vs. RMHC service unit level comparisons

SKL vs. RMHC comparisons will be made according to the following.

Analysis level	SKL data element	RMHC data element
Region level	RegId	RegId
Organisational level	RegId, OrgId	RegId, OrgId
Service unit	RegId, OrgId, ResId	RegId, OrgId, SUId

1.3.3. SKL vs. CMHC service unit level comparisons

SKL vs. CMHC comparisons will be made according to the following.

	SKL data element	CMHC data element
Region level	RegId	RegId
Organisational level	RegId, OrgId	RegId, OrgId
Service unit level	RegId, OrgId, AMBU_TargetPop	RegId, OrgId, SERV.TargetPop

1.3.4. SKL vs. NOCC entity comparisons

SKL vs. NOCC comparisons will be made according to the following.

Analysis level	SKL data element	NOCC data element
Region level	RegId	RegId
Organisational level	RegId, OrgId	RegId, OrgId
Hospital level	RegId, OrgId, HospId	RegId, OrgId, HospId
Admitted service unit	RegId, OrgId, AdmId	RegId, OrgId, SUId, SUType=1

Analysis level	SKL data element	NOCC data element
Residential service unit	RegId, OrgId, ResId	RegId, OrgId, SUId, SUType=2
Ambulatory service unit	RegId, OrgId, AMBU_TargetPop	RegId, OrgId, (SUId_Targetpop,SUType=3)

1.3.5. Data Integrity

For cases of missing data (that is, unknown, not stated or not available):

- For **Numeric [Num] fields**, the data should be reported as zero, using leading zeros when necessary to pad out the field to the required length. The principle here is that all numeric fields require a valid value.
- For **Text [Char] fields**, the data should be space-filled to the required length. For single character fields where a 'missing/not stated' value has been specified for a particular data element (for example, '9' has been specified for missing data), use the stated value for 'missing/not stated' rather than simply space filling.

Values in **Date [Date]** fields must be recorded in compliance with the standard format used across the *National health data dictionary*; specifically, dates must be of fixed 8 column width in the format DDMMYYYY, with leading zeros used when necessary to pad out a value. For instance, 13 March 2025 would appear as 13032025.

Values in **Numeric [Num]** fields must be zero-filled and right-justified. These should consist only of the numerals 0 to 9 and the decimal (".") point if applicable to the data element.

Note: Fields defined as 'Numeric' are those that have numeric properties—that is, the values, for example, can be added or subtracted in a manner that is valid. Where a field uses numeric characters that do not have these properties (for example, the use of numbers for *Patient identifier*), the field is defined as 'Character'.

Values in **Character [Char]** fields must be left justified and space-filled. These should consist of any of the printable ASCII character set (that is, excluding control codes such as newline, bell and linefeed).

1.4. Dataset specifications (DSS)

The following tables specify the order in which the data items should be provided to the AIHW.

The extract format consists of a set of hierarchically ordered *Data records*, of which there are eleven types (see [Table 1.2](#)). In each extract file for any given period, the *Data records* must be preceded by a single *File Header Record* having the structure outlined in [Table 1.3](#).

All records presented in the extract file should be grouped in the following order: Header Record; State/Territory details records; Region details records; Organisation details records; Organisation full-time equivalent staff by service setting details records; Hospital/Service unit cluster details records; and Service unit details records.

With the exception of Region, Organisation and Service unit cluster details records, all data records should include the following elements in the order shown:

- Record type
- Establishment identifier (comprising: *State/Territory identifier*; *Region identifier*; *Organisation identifier*; *Hospital identifier/Service unit cluster identifier*; and *Service unit identifier*)
- Specific data in the format specified for the given record type.

The order of fields in a record must be the same as the order they are listed in the Record Layouts specified below. Field values should be formatted as specified in the Record Layouts.

The first field in each record must be *Record Type*. Valid values for *Record Type* are shown in [Table 1.2](#).

Table 1.2 Valid values for Record Type

Record Type	Description
HR	File Header Record
ST	State/Territory details records
STNGOE	State MH NGOE Payments records
REG	Region details records
REGNGOE	Region MH NGOE Payments records
ORG	Organisation details records
FTEORG	Organisation full-time equivalent staff by service setting details records
HOSP	Hospital details records
CLUS	Service unit cluster details records
ADMI	Admitted patient service unit details records
AMBU	Ambulatory service unit details records
RESI	Residential service unit details records

NGOE records may be supplied but do not contribute to the SKL checking processes.

1.4.1. File header record

The first record of the extract file must be a File Header Record (*Record Type* = 'HR'), and it must be the only such record in the file.

The File Header Record is a quality control mechanism, which uniquely identifies each file that is submitted to the Online Validator.

The layout of the File Header Record is shown in [Table 1.3](#).

Table 1.3 Record Layout for File Header Record within the data extract Data record layout

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = HR
State/Territory Identifier (State) ¹	Char[1]	9	720081	1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Batch Number (BatchNo)	Char[9]	10	—	Represents the YYYYNNNNN component of the extract file name.
Report Period Start Date (RepStart)	Date[8]	19	—	Report period start date
Report Period End Date (RepEnd)	Date[8]	27	—	Report period end date
Data File Generation Date (GenDt)	Date[8]	35	—	Data file generation date
Data File Type (FileType)	Char[3]	43	—	Value = SKL
SKL Specification Version Number (SpecVer)	Char[5]	46	—	Value = 04.02

Record length = 50

Notes

[1]
(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.2. State/Territory data record

The extract format for the *Data records* is specified in detail in [Table 1.4](#) to [Table 1.14](#). The order of fields in each record must be the same as the order they are shown below. Field values should be formatted as specified.

Table 1.4 Data record layout - State/Territory details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = ST
State/Territory Identifier (State) ²	Char[1]	9	720081	1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
State/Territory Name (StateName)	Char[28]	10	—	Name used to identify the State/Territory
Blank 186 Spacing Field (Blank186)	Blank[186]	38	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 223

Notes

[2]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.3. State MH NGOE Payments data record

Table 1.5 Data record layout - State MH NGOE Payments

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = STNGOE

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/Territory Identifier (State) ³	Char[1]	9	720081	1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Blank 11 Spacing Field (Blank11)	Blank[11]	10	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 20

Notes

[3]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.4. Region data record

Table 1.6 Data record layout - Region details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = REG

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ⁴	Char[1]	9	720081	1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Region Name (RegName)	Char[60]	12	407187	Common name used to identify the Region.
Blank 180 Spacing Field (Blank180)	Blank[180]	72	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 251

Notes

[4]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.5. Region MH NGOE Payments data record

Table 1.7 Data record layout - Region MH NGOE Payments

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = REGNGOE

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ⁵	Char[1]	9	720081	1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Blank 11 Spacing Field (Blank11)	Blank[11]	12	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 22

Notes

[5]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.6. Organisation data record

Table 1.8 Data record layout - Organisation Details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = ORG

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ⁶	Char[1]	9	720081	1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDSs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDSs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Organisation Name (OrgName)	Char[100]	16	405767	Common name used to identify the Organisation
Blank 539 Spacing Field (Blank539)	Blank[539]	116	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 654

Notes

[6]
(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.7. Organisation: FTE staff by Service Setting data record

Table 1.9 Data record layout - Organisation: FTE staff by Service Setting data record

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = FTEORG

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ⁷	Char[1]	9	720081	1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Region Identifier (Regld)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Organisation Identifier (Orgld)	Char[4]	12	404186	AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Service Setting (Setting)	Char[1]	16	493347	1: Admitted patient care setting 2: Residential care setting 3: Ambulatory care setting 4: Organisational overhead setting
Blank 57 Spacing Field (Blank57)	Blank[57]	17	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 73

Notes

[7]
(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.8. Hospital data record

Table 1.10 Data record layout - Hospital details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = HOSP
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ⁸	Char[1]	9	720081	1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDSs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDSs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Hospital Identifier (HospId)	Char[5]	16	722233	AAAAA: Hospital identifier (equals Establishment number as reported for NMDS for Admitted Patient Care)
Sector (Sector)	Char[1]	21	269977	1: Public 2: Private
Blank 1 Spacing Field (Blank1)	Blank[1]	22	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values
Hospital Name (HospName)	Char[100]	23	407430	Common name used to identify the hospital.
Blank 10 Spacing Field (Blank10)	Blank[10]	123	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 132

Notes

[8]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.9. Service Unit Cluster data record

Table 1.11 Data record layout - Service Unit Cluster Details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = CLUS
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ⁹	Char[1]	9	720081	<p>1: New South Wales</p> <p>2: Victoria</p> <p>3: Queensland</p> <p>4: South Australia</p> <p>5: Western Australia</p> <p>6: Tasmania</p> <p>7: Northern Territory</p> <p>8: Australian Capital Territory</p>
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Service Unit Cluster Identifier (ClusId)	Char[5]	16	404858	AAAAA: An identifier to indicate that a service unit is one of a cluster of service units, defined through administrative or clinical governance arrangements. If no cluster applies, set to 00000. As this field enables linking with the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care, the identifiers used in this collection should be the same.
Service Unit Cluster Name (ClusName)	Char[100]	21	409209	If no cluster applies, enter organisation name as appears in previous line.

Record length = 120

Notes

[9]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

1.4.10. Admitted Patient Service Unit data record

Table 1.12 Data record layout - Admitted Patient Service Unit Details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = <i>ADMI</i>
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ¹⁰	Char[1]	9	720081	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Region Identifier (RegId)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDSs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Organisation Identifier (OrgId)	Char[4]	12	404186	AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDSs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Hospital Identifier (HospId)	Char[5]	16	722233	AAAAA: Hospital identifier (equals Establishment number as reported for NMDS for Admitted Patient Care)
Admitted Patient Service Unit Identifier (AdmId)	Char[6]	21	721740	AAAAAA: Service unit identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDSs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Blank 3 Spacing Field (Blank3)	Blank[3]	27	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Target Population (TargetPop) 11	Char[1]	30	682403	1: Child and adolescent 2: Older person 3: Forensic 4: General 5: Youth 7: Not applicable
Blank 1 Spacing Field (Blank1)	Blank[1]	31	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values
Admitted Patient Service Unit Name (AdmiName)	Char[100]	32	721830	Common name used to identify the service unit.
Blank 58 Spacing Field (Blank58)	Blank[58]	132	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 189

Notes

[10]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

[11]

Code 7 only applies to FTEORG usage, METEOR code 9 does not apply

1.4.11. Ambulatory Service Unit data record

Table 1.13 Data record layout - Ambulatory Service Unit Details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = AMBU

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ¹²	Char[1]	9	720081	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Region Identifier (Regld)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Organisation Identifier (Orgld)	Char[4]	12	404186	AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Service Unit Cluster Identifier (Clusld)	Char[5]	16	404858	AAAAA: An identifier to indicate that a service unit is one of a cluster of service units, defined through administrative or clinical governance arrangements. If no cluster applies, set to 00000. As this field enables linking with the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care, the identifiers used in this collection should be the same.
Ambulatory Service Unit Identifier (Ambuld)	Char[6]	21	750360	AAAAAA: Service unit identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Blank 3 Spacing Field (Blank3)	Blank[3]	27	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values
Target Population (TargetPop) ¹³	Char[1]	30	682403	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Child and adolescent 2: Older person 3: Forensic 4: General 5: Youth 7: Not applicable

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Sector (Sector)	Char[1]	31	269977	1: Public 2: Private
Blank 1 Spacing Field (Blank1)	Blank[1]	32	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values
Ambulatory Service Unit Name (AmbuName)	Char[100]	33	750374	Common name used to identify the service unit.
Blank 49 Spacing Field (Blank49)	Blank[49]	133	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 181

Notes

[12]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

[13]

Code 7 only applies to FTEORG usage, METEOR code 9 does not apply

1.4.12. Residential Service Unit data record

Table 1.14 Data record layout - Residential Service Unit Details

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Record Type (RecType)	Char[8]	1	—	Value = RESI

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
State/ Territory Identifier (State) ¹⁴	Char[1]	9	720081	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: New South Wales 2: Victoria 3: Queensland 4: South Australia 5: Western Australia 6: Tasmania 7: Northern Territory 8: Australian Capital Territory
Region Identifier (Regld)	Char[2]	10	269940	AA: Region (values as specified by individual jurisdiction). Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Organisation Identifier (Orgld)	Char[4]	12	404186	AAAA: Mental health service organisation identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Service Unit Cluster Identifier (Clusld)	Char[5]	16	404858	AAAAA: An identifier to indicate that a service unit is one of a cluster of service units, defined through administrative or clinical governance arrangements. If no cluster applies, set to 00000. As this field enables linking with the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care, the identifiers used in this collection should be the same.
Residential Service Unit Identifier (Resild)	Char[6]	21	722711	AAAAAA: Service unit identifier. Identifiers used in this collection should map to the identifiers used in data for the NMDs for Community Mental Health Care and Residential Mental Health Care.
Blank 3 Spacing Field (Blank3)	Blank[3]	27	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values
Target Population (TargetPop) ¹⁵	Char[1]	30	682403	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Child and adolescent 2: Older person 3: Forensic 4: General 5: Youth 7: Not applicable

Data Element (Field Name)	Type [Length]	Start	METEOR Identifier	Notes / Values
Blank 2 Spacing Field (Blank2)	Blank[2]	31	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values
Sector (Sector)	Char[1]	33	269977	1: Public 2: Private
Blank 1 Spacing Field (Blank1)	Blank[1]	34	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values
Residential Service Unit Name (ResiName)	Char[100]	35	722715	Common name used to identify the service unit.
Blank 55 Spacing Field (Blank55)	Blank[55]	135	—	Field value is ignored for SKL processing, can contain spaces or MHE values

Record length = 189

Notes

[14]

(METEOR includes code 9, but that is not applicable to SKL)

[15]

Code 7 only applies to FTEORG usage, METEOR code 9 does not apply

2. Submission and validation of SKL data files

Submission, delivery and validation of the 2024-25 SKL data (version 4.02) will occur through the [Online Validator](#).

2.1. Timelines

Jurisdictions are requested to propose a file using the Online Validator by **2 January 2026**. The AIHW and Department of Health and Aged Care are aiming to have fully reviewed and validated the file by **17 April 2026** in accordance with the schedule in [Table 2.1](#), so structural changes are anticipated prior to the MHE file submissions.

Table 2.1 SKL 2024-25 issues validation

Progress point description	Responsibility	Completion Time	Completion date
Compliant file proposed for review	Jurisdictions		2 January 2026
Submitter comment on issues within the issue list	Jurisdictions	7 weeks	20 February 2026
Reviewer reply to issues within the issue list	AIHW	3 weeks	13 March 2026
Resolution of any remaining issues - validation process completed and submission finalised	AIHW/Jurisdiction discussion back and forth	5 weeks	17 April 2026

2.2. File type and naming convention

DAT files should be a single Fixed Format data file, with each record in the file being terminated with Carriage Return (CR) and Line Feed (LF) characters.

The data file will have the naming convention of *SKLSSSYYYNNNNN.DAT* where:

- SKL denotes 'Mental Health Establishments Skeleton'
- SSS is the abbreviation for the State name, using the following convention:

NSW:

New South Wales

VIC:

Victoria

QLD:

Queensland

WAU:

Western Australia

SAU:

South Australia

TAS:

Tasmania

ACT:

Australian Capital Territory

NTE:

Northern Territory

- YYYY indicates the reporting year covered in the file, using the convention where financial years are abbreviated by referring to the last calendar year of the pair (for example, 2024-25 is identified as 2025)
- NNNNN represents an incremental batch number (leading zeros present).

Adherence to this approach requires that any resubmitted files should have a batch number greater than the file they replace. For example, the first MHE Skeleton data file submitted by the Australian Capital Territory covering the 2024-25 year would be named 'SKLACT202500001.DAT'.

2.3. Validation

Mental Health National Minimum Dataset (NMDS) validation is the process of reviewing and cleaning the mental health service data received from state and territory governments using the [Online Validator](#) a web based validation tool. The process includes:

- Checks on file upload, before the submitter chooses to propose the file for review
- The option for reviewers to accept or reject the proposed file for review
- Collaborative review and validation
 - Review and accept all issues in the issues list in consultation with jurisdictions as necessary.
 - Review data set reports (CMHC and RMHC) and raise additional issues with the jurisdiction as necessary.
- A finalisation step, indicating that the submission process for that reporting cycle is complete.

2.3.1. Checks on file upload

The pre-submission checks ensure that the submitted data file structure is correct: that the data is in the correct layout, that there are no disallowed blank fields and no invalid characters. These checks ensure that each line of data is correctly formatted and aligns to the specifications.

2.3.2. Collaborative review and validation

Collaborative review and validation is the process of reviewing unusual trends in the files. Each collection is different and has its own structure, but the general process of validating is the same. In this process:

1. Submitters work through the issues list, either providing comments on known issues or updating and resubmitting the file. It is expected that most jurisdictions will need to submit updated files multiple times before validation is finalised. Note that jurisdictions must submit comments on issues before the AIHW is able to accept an issue.
2. Submitters and reviewers collaborate via the Online Validator, when more information is required on an issue. Each jurisdiction will have an AIHW staff member assigned as the lead validator, who will be in touch early in the validation period. Please ensure that any email communication is also Cc'd to the Mentalhealth@aihw.gov.au inbox in case of staff absences or changes in AIHW staffing.
3. The AIHW will review the 'data set reports' and will raise additional queries about any large fluctuations evident in these reports after investigating which regions, organisations and service units are causing them. The AIHW will endeavour to ensure that additional queries are limited to essential issues that impact the state-wide result.

2.4. Additional information and queries

AIHW, Department of Health and Aged Care and Logicly staff are available to answer any queries in respect of changes to the Validator's MHE module and validation rules. In order to obtain a coordinated response, requests should be sent to the following parties simultaneously:

AIHW

Email: mentalhealth@aihw.gov.au

Logicly

Email: support@validator.com.au