

Forward Work Program 2005–06 to 2007–08

Australian Bureau of Statistics

ABSHOUSE



**Australian
Bureau of
Statistics**

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Forward Work Program 2005–06 to 2007–08

Table of Contents

Preface	v
Notes to this publication	vi
General Information	
Authority and Legislation	1
Overview of the ABS	2
ABS Strategic Management	3
How the ABS Operates	4
Governance and Planning	7
Products and Services	11
Dissemination and Pricing Policy	12
Top Structure	13
Contacts	16
ABS Forward Work Program 2005–06 to 2007–08	
ABS Strategic Directions	18
Economic Statistics Group	
National Accounts	24
International Accounts	25
International Trade	26
Financial Accounts	27
Public Sector Accounts	28
Prices	29
Business Indicators	30
Economy Wide Statistics	31
Business Demographics and Frames	32
Innovation and Technology	33
Agriculture	34
Mining	35
Manufacturing	36
Construction	37
Transport	38
Service Industries	39
Tourism	40
Environment	41
Economic Statistics Standards	42
Population Statistics Group	
Demography	44
Labour Statistics	45
Health Statistics	46
Education and Training Statistics	47
Crime and Justice Statistics	48
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics	49
Living Conditions Statistics	50
Family and Community Statistics	51
Culture and Recreation Statistics	52
Rural and Regional Statistics	53
Ageing Statistics	54
Children and Youth Statistics	55
Social Analysis and Reporting	56
Population Statistics Standards	57

Table of Contents *continued*

Methodology Division	
Statistical Coordination	60
Analytical Services	61
Census and Geography	
Census of Population and Housing	64
Geography	65
State Program	
State and Territory Statistical Services	68

Preface

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's official statistical agency. It provides statistics on a wide range of economic and social matters, covering government, business and the population in general. It also has an important coordination function with respect to the statistical activities of other official bodies, both in Australia and overseas.

This document describes for each ABS program the outputs, clients and uses of the statistical information, and the main medium term developments. Resources used for each ABS program are also provided.

Information about the full range of ABS publications and products is provided in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products* (cat. no. 1101.0) which is available, along with a range of other ABS information, on the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>.

Dennis Trewin
Australian Statistician

May 2005

Notes to this publication

Theme Pages

The ABS web site contains theme pages that bring together all published ABS statistical information relating to a specific topic or region. They provide links to related ABS products and non-ABS statistical information. They may also provide information on ABS collections relating to the theme and notifications of ongoing statistical matters of interest to users.

Theme pages can be accessed from the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>.

Methods, Classifications, Concepts and Standards

The ABS produces a range of products that describe the concepts, sources and methods used to compile Australia's major economic and social statistics. These products provide background information to assist users in analysing and interpreting the statistics and include standard classifications used in the ABS, for example, industry, occupation, commodity, country, languages, labour force and social classifications.

Methods, classifications, concepts and standards are available from the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>.

Direct Costs

Direct costs represent accrual expenditure directly attributable to the program (such as salaries, overtime and travel).

Staff Usage 2003/04

Comprises full time staff and part time staff at their full time equivalent. Excludes inoperative staff.

Authority and Legislation

Principal legislation determining the functions and responsibilities of the ABS are the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* (ABS Act) and the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* (C&S Act).

The functions of the ABS are defined in section 6 of the ABS Act as follows:

- (a) to constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian government and, by arrangements with the governments of the states, provide statistical services for those governments;
- (b) to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information;
- (c) to ensure coordination of the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information, with particular regard to:
 - (i) the avoidance of duplication in the collection by official bodies of information for statistical purposes;
 - (ii) the attainment of compatibility between, and the integration of, statistics compiled by official bodies; and
 - (iii) the maximum possible utilization, for statistical purposes, of information, and means of collection of information, available to official bodies;
- (d) to formulate, and ensure compliance with, standards for the carrying out by official bodies of operations for statistical purposes;
- (e) to provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics; and
- (f) to provide liaison between Australia, on the one hand, and other countries and international organisations, on the other hand, in relation to statistical matters.

The ABS Act also established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC). The functions of ASAC are to advise the Minister and the Statistician in relation to:

- (a) the improvement, extension and coordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia;
- (b) annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services; and
- (c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services.

All state and territory governments are represented on ASAC. Council members are also drawn from a wide variety of organisations concerned with most major economic and social issues.

The C&S Act provides the Statistician with the authority to conduct statistical collections and, when necessary, to direct a person to provide statistical information. The Act imposes on the ABS obligations to publish and disseminate compilations and analyses of statistical information and to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act.

The ABS Act requires that the Statistician prepares, for presentation to parliament, an annual report on the operations of the Bureau. The ABS Act also requires that ASAC prepares and submits to the Minister for presentation to the parliament, a report relating to the matters connected with the operation of the Act.

Under the *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*, Commonwealth and state statistical services have been integrated since 1958 (in Tasmania since 1924). Although not covered by legislation, similar arrangements apply in both territories. There is regular consultation with state and territory governments on statistical priorities.



Overview of the ABS

Census and Statistics Act 1905

- Provides the legislative authority to undertake the population census and other statistical collections
- Provides the Statistician with the power to direct a person to supply information
- Requires the ABS to publish the results of its collections
- Imposes strict secrecy provisions on officers of the ABS.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975

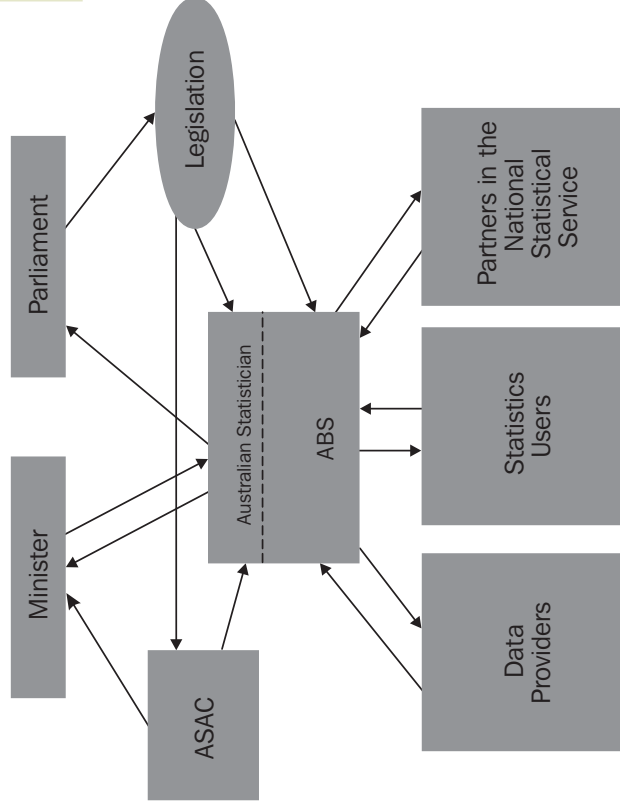
- Established and ensures the independence of both the ABS and the Australian Statistician
- Describes the functions of the ABS
- Requires ABS to advise parliament of proposals for new collections
- Established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council
- Requires ABS and ASAC to report to Parliament each year.

ABS Functions

- To constitute the central and statistical authority for the Australian Government and Governments of the States and Territories
- To collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information on a wide range of economic and social matters
- To ensure coordination of the statistical operations of official bodies
- To formulate, and ensure compliance with, statistical standards
- To provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics
- To liaise with statistical agencies of other countries and international organisations.

ABS Mission

"to assist and encourage informed decision-making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by providing a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service"



Statistics Users

- Views on statistical activities and priorities gathered by advisory committees, statistics user groups, discussions with government, business and academics, and views invited from the community
- Client management, with bilateral consultation on statistical needs with key users
- Market research into statistics users' requirements.

Corporate Plan objectives

- An expanded and improved national statistical service
- An ABS statistical service that is timely, relevant, responsive and respected for its integrity and quality
- Informed and increased use of statistics
- An active contributor to international statistical activities that are important to Australia and our region
- An organisation that encourages learning, innovation, performance and excellence in all that it does
- The trust and cooperation of our providers
- Strong recognition and support for the ABS amongst decision makers and the community.

Core Values

- Relevance
- Integrity
- Access for all
- Professionalism
- Trust of providers.

Corporate Governance - Key Fora

- Australian Statistics Advisory Council
- Executive Meetings (weekly)
- Senior Management Meetings (6 monthly)
- Audit Committee
- Information Management Resource Committee
- Protective Security Management Committee
- Human Resource Strategy Committee.

Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC)

- Advise the Minister and Statistician on:
 - The improvement, extension and coordination of Statistical service provided for public purposes in Australia
 - Annual and longer term priorities and programs of Work that should be undertaken by the ABS
 - Any other matters relating to those statistical Services.

ABS Strategic Management

Corporate Plan

The ABS corporate plan sets out the mission, values and objectives of the organisation, thereby defining the desired state that we are planning toward over the next 3–5 years. Together, the mission, values and objectives help to stimulate longer term thinking in response to a changing environment, and assist us to reassess what we do and how we do it. They also provide unifying directions for ABS operations, and by reaffirming the ABS mission, reinforce our belief that we serve the whole community, and that a good statistical system is an important pillar of a robust democracy.

The statement of mission, values, objectives and related strategies in the corporate plan provides the higher level frame within which the following rolling three-year ABS forward work program has been developed, and in which future work programs will be developed. It provides the broad context in which we ensure we use our resources effectively and efficiently.

The key components of the ABS corporate plan are outlined below. These provide a useful reference for readers in working through the operational objectives and strategies of ABS programs set out on the following pages.

The ABS is currently in the process of reviewing the corporate plan. The new corporate plan will be launched in December 2005.

Mission

We assist and encourage informed decision-making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by providing a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

Values

Our values are the key to the continued high performance and reputation of the ABS, particularly:

- the relevance of ABS statistics
- the accessibility of ABS data to all Australians
- the integrity of ABS statistics
- the professionalism of ABS work
- the trust of our providers.

The ABS values its staff and has obligations to them; staff in turn have obligations to the ABS.

Objectives

To achieve the ABS mission, the ABS currently has the following objectives:

- an expanded and improved national statistical service
- an ABS statistical service that is timely, relevant, responsive, and respected for its integrity and quality
- informed and increased use of statistics
- an active contributor to international statistical activities that are important to Australia or our region
- an organisation that encourages learning, innovation, performance and excellence in all it does
- the trust and cooperation of our providers
- strong recognition and support for the ABS amongst decision makers and the community.

How the ABS Operates

Introduction

The ABS produces and disseminates statistics under two broad statistical programs:

- Economic Statistics
- Population and Social Statistics.

Both areas of statistics involve extensive data collection through censuses, surveys and from administrative data sources.

Economic statistics are produced predominantly from the ABS business survey program conducted by the Economic Statistics Group (ESG), while population and social statistics are produced mainly through the ABS household survey program within the Population Statistics Group (PSG).

The ABS statistical programs are supported by service areas which deliver assistance and advice on statistical methods, data and metadata management, information technology, client management, dissemination, human resources and other corporate services.

The ABS has a central office in Canberra and regional offices located in the eight state and territory capitals. Regional offices are primarily responsible for the delivery of statistical services to their state or territory. All regional offices, apart from the ACT office, have some responsibilities for national operations for particular statistical activities.

The Statistical Collection Process

While the economic and population statistics programs are generally run separately they are characterised by common statistical principles and many similar procedures. The statistical process involves a range of statistical operations, from developing specifications for statistics based on user information needs through to the delivery of data and support to clients.

The diagram below presents the broad stages of a typical survey cycle. It distinguishes between a core set of tasks and activities which form the three broad stages of the statistical collection process, and two overarching functions which ensure that ABS products, processes and services are of high quality and contribute to achieving corporate objectives and delivering on the ABS mission.



Functional areas undertaking statistical operations

The statistical cycle has three stages — setting up the collection, collecting and processing, and informing and explaining.

The first stage of the statistical process involves consulting and planning with users. Statistics users are consulted to determine their information needs which are used to define the scope, content and frequency of statistical collections. Consultation takes place through ABS-organised statistics user groups; direct discussion with interested Commonwealth, state or local agencies, academics, industry bodies, etc.; and through the release of information or discussion papers inviting comment. Consultations cover both needs for data on new or emerging topics, and modifications to existing data collections. Contact with consulted groups continues throughout the survey cycle to keep them informed on progress and as a check that developments towards statistical outputs remain on track to meet survey objectives.

The next stage of the statistical cycle covers activities associated with data collection, processing and analysis. Data collection activities include survey despatch, data receipt and follow-up for non-response. Data may be collected directly from providers through surveys or censuses, or indirectly by accessing data collected by other organisations, particularly Commonwealth, state and territory administrative agencies. The processing stages of the cycle cover data entry, checking individual records for completeness, consistency and accuracy, producing aggregate survey results, checking consistency and validity of aggregated data and preparing data for public release.

The final stage of the statistical cycle covers dissemination and decision support. These activities include marketing and client liaison. Several areas support these activities. A key objective for the ABS is to maximise the use of ABS and non-ABS statistics by increasing the visibility and access to statistics; optimising the mix of dissemination channels; and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of information service delivery. To achieve this objective, a range of products and delivery options have been developed. These are detailed in Dissemination and Pricing Policy.

The statistical operations of each stage of the cycle are undertaken by a range of specialist areas. Other specialist areas have responsibility for ensuring that the broader objectives of managing quality and processes, and delivering statistical leadership, are met. The key organisational areas and functions that are involved in the statistical collection process are described below.

National Statistics Centres (NSCs) provide statistical leadership, internally and externally, for each field of economic and population statistics. NSC responsibilities include: establishing and maintaining close links with key external clients, and ensuring the ABS understands and satisfies their needs for data; providing leadership in the development of statistics within and outside the ABS; maintaining knowledge of current and emerging policy issues and debates, and assessing potential statistical impacts; understanding and awareness of important national and international statistics relating to these issues; and complex analytical work, which often draws on multiple information sources. NSCs also participate in the development of survey proposals and survey outputs, including dissemination strategies.

Methodology Division (MD) has specific responsibilities for supporting the statistical collection process. MD provides advice on survey design and methods and on data quality through all stages of the survey cycle. The Division ensures ABS surveys are based on sound statistical principles and practices and that the statistics produced best meet survey design objectives. MD also undertakes research on statistical methods to improve the efficiency and accuracy of ABS work.

Business Statistics Centres (BSCs) are the business owners of data collected for a particular field of economic statistics. The BSCs are responsible for the specification of output requirements to meet user needs and for determining appropriate collection methodologies for their specific subject matter. BSCs undertake more complex editing functions, analysis and preparation of survey-specific commentary and articles. They are the main contact point for data users, to help users interpret survey results for regular releases of ABS statistics in their field. Other responsibilities of BSCs include: data quality assurance, including the specification of data quality requirements to the Economic Statistics Data Centre; and the consistent application of existing or new statistical frameworks, classifications, standards and concepts.

For population statistics, Household Survey Centres (HSCs) project manage the survey process. HSCs manage consultation with relevant statistics users, develop survey objectives, prepare survey proposals, and develop the survey content. To support their data collection activities HSCs develop and maintain survey-specific classifications and coding systems. For each survey they ensure appropriate sample design and collection methodologies are developed. HSCs are responsible for quality assurance of all aspects of the survey. HSCs develop dissemination strategies; manage the delivery of the initial publications and other outputs from each collection; and coordinate evaluation of the survey process.

How the ABS Operates *continued*

For economic statistics, the Economic Statistics Data Centre (ESDC) is responsible for managing the data collection phase of business surveys. An important aspect of its role is the maintenance of business survey frames – that is, lists of Australian businesses that include details on contacts, structure and type of operations. It is from these frames that selections are made of businesses to participate in ABS surveys. The primary source of frames for economic surveys is the ABS Business Register. Other ESDC functions include: sample selection; questionnaire development and testing; questionnaire despatch; data collection, including administrative data; basic checks for completeness of responses; non-response follow-up; handling of provider complaints; and key provider management.

The Population Survey Operations (PSO) area provides national leadership and direction for the household survey collection operations, with individual state operations managed by ABS Regional Offices. PSO is responsible for household sample generation and maintenance; interviewer recruitment, training and management; survey interviewing, data capture and coding of data collected; and provision of survey management information and performance reporting. A key PSO responsibility is the preparation of survey frames. Population survey frames are based on the dwellings recorded in the most recent Census of Population and Housing, conducted five-yearly by the ABS.

Supporting statistical operations

The National Corporate Services team makes a contribution to the ABS' ability to successfully achieve its business objectives. Corporate Services:

- manages corporate governance activities
- identifies opportunities to drive productivity improvements, review the ABS work program, grow the business and enhance our planning capabilities, processes and frameworks
- provides leadership in driving cultural change
- recruits, develops and retains the workforce needed to deliver the ABS work program
- ensures that these objectives are achieved in an environment of continuous improvement.

Several programs within the ABS provide the infrastructure which is necessary for undertaking data collection and producing official statistics. This infrastructure comprises the concepts, classifications, standards, survey methodology and information technology systems which support the statistical process.

For Population Statistics, the Population Statistics Infrastructure Branch provides ongoing specialist support to the survey program. This support covers areas such as statistical standards, survey and systems development, collection methodology, instrument design and testing, data management and dissemination, professional training and technical support.

For Economic Statistics, the Integration, Coordination and Innovation Branch develops and maintains the key components of economic statistics infrastructure. Branch roles include development of economic statistics standards, development of selected systems infrastructure, and provision of leadership in the integration of economic statistics.

Technology Services Division (TSD) provides ABS staff with stable, reliable, and secure information technology infrastructure, including hardware, software and network facilities. The Division maintains systems to ensure they are efficient, timely and relevant and assists other areas of the ABS to improve efficiency and effectiveness in their use of those systems. TSD also develops specialised software to support ABS statistical processes. The Division undertakes systems analysis and design, specialist programming services and provide advice on new and developing information technologies.

Governance and Planning

Corporate Governance

ABS corporate governance arrangements ensure transparency in decision making, operation and accountability by promoting strong leadership, sound management and effective planning and review. The operations and performance of the ABS are subject to both internal and external scrutiny. The results of this scrutiny inform senior management discussion.

The Policy Secretariat program of the ABS has an important role as a focal point for ABS corporate governance. It supports the effective operation of governance forums, ensures that the ABS operates within the scope of its authority and legislative basis, and manages ABS audit, review and risk management activities.

Some of the key ABS corporate governance mechanisms are described below.

External Scrutiny

External scrutiny takes the form of:

- consideration by the Australian Statistical Advisory Committee (ASAC). The Council is the key advisory body to the ABS and meets twice yearly to provide input to the directions and priorities of the ABS work program. The Council advises the Australian Statistician and the Minister, and presents an annual report to Parliament
- audits by the Australian National Audit Office, either of ABS operations specifically or as part of cross-agency audits
- review of statistical activity by various advisory committees and user groups. These include:
 - standing and ad hoc expert advisory groups to provide advice on statistical priorities and developments in fields such as labour, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, agriculture, economics, housing, environment, mining, statistical methodology, housing, crime and justice, tourism, transport, and innovation
 - user groups established to advise the ABS on the concepts, content and dissemination programs of individual major household surveys
 - advisory boards established for ABS National Statistical Centres. The forward work program for each statistical centre is agreed between the Australian Statistician and the board.
- an annual report presented to Parliament each year.

Internal Scrutiny

Internal scrutiny takes the form of:

- periodic reviews of statistical collections and service functions. In reviews of statistical collections, external users are widely consulted and, in some instances, external users assist the review team. Internal reviews cover both the effectiveness and efficiency of various ABS activities
- regular reports from all Assistant Statisticians and Regional Directors to the Executive Meetings
- an internal audit program conducted by external service providers, covering different facets of ABS operations and overseen by the ABS Audit Committee.

During 2003–04, the ABS finalised and implemented its Risk Management Framework and Risk Management Guidelines.

Senior Management Committees

An important feature of ABS corporate governance is the role played by senior management committees which are active in developing policies and strategies, identifying ABS priorities, ensuring appropriate planning and implementation to address those priorities and effective monitoring of ABS activities.

The major senior management committees are as follows:

- ABS Management Meetings

The Management Meetings play a major role in determining ABS strategic directions, priorities and resource allocations. The Management Meeting is held twice a year, and agrees on the ABS forward work program. Each Division and Group report annually to the ABS Management Meeting.

- Executive Meetings

Executive Meetings are held weekly to address emerging corporate issues. Each Assistant Statistician and Regional Director in the ABS reports, on a rolling basis, to the Executive Meeting in respect of their area of functional responsibility.

- Protective Security Management Committee

The ABS maintains a comprehensive security framework, overseen by a Protective Security Management Committee chaired by a Deputy Australian Statistician. This security framework ensures that both physical and computer security are maintained. The Committee is a key means by which the ABS meets its legal requirement not to divulge identifiable information, and therefore operate with the trust and confidence of data providers.

- Audit Committee

The ABS Audit Committee provides assurance to the Australian Statistician that a comprehensive control framework is in place and working effectively for all business systems; and that the operation and management of all ABS systems are sufficiently adequate to ensure that the ABS complies with all its legislative and other obligations; and externally published information generated by these systems is of appropriate quality and conforms with legislative and other obligations. The committee identifies significant issues of concern or non-compliance. It is chaired by a Deputy Australian Statistician, includes external representation, and meets four times a year.

- Information Resources Management Committee

The Information Resources Management Committee considers matters of strategic significance concerning data and information management and related policy, and major issues relating to the application of information and communication technology in the ABS. It is chaired by a Deputy Australian Statistician.

- Human Resource Strategy Committee

The Human Resource Strategy Committee provides the ABS with high level guidance on key human resource issues. Policy issues that are considered by this Committee include work force planning, staff development and training, remuneration, occupational health and safety and workplace diversity. It is chaired by the First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division.

Planning in the ABS

The provision of a high quality national statistical service is a complex management exercise because of the diverse nature of user requirements and, in most instances, the lead time required to develop statistical collections. While the ABS recognises that it is impossible to satisfy all demands, in order to maintain relevance it seeks to react positively and responsibly to the demonstrated needs of its users. At the same time, the ABS is conscious of the constraints on public spending and on the workload placed on providers of information for its collections. Continued effort is made to review and, where possible, reduce provider load.

The ABS maintains the three-year forward work program which is rolled forward on an annual basis, and reported on in this document. Responsibility for this task falls within the Policy Secretariat program which is charged with developing and managing the processes for budget management, work program prioritisation and development as well as advising senior management of the ABS on spending and savings proposals.

Each year relative priorities and competing resource requirements of all program components are formally and extensively considered by senior management. Particular attention is given to:

- the extent to which particular statistical activities continue to be justified in relation to other work for which a demand has been expressed by users
- the cost imposed on respondents to collections, in terms of time and effort
- prospective total resources available to the ABS within the three-year period
- the market potential and revenue implications of the various initiatives proposed
- productivity gains which have been achieved or which might be possible in the future
- the relative share of resources spent on statistical and non-statistical work.

Proposals from managers of program components are considered by senior management, generally following consultation with major users. The proposed forward work program and resource estimates which emerge are then considered by ASAC. The work program is finalised in the light of ASAC advice.

Statistics user groups advising the ABS

The user groups advising the ABS on its forward work program include:

National Groups

- Advisory Committee on Australian and International Disability Data
- Agriculture User Forum
- Australia-New Zealand Population Workshop
- Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations Reference Group
- Australian Bureau of Statistics-Australian Taxation Office High Level Liaison Committee
- Business Longitudinal Database External Advisory Group
- Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy Working Group
- Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group
- Cultural Ministers' Council Statistics Working Group
- Economic Statistics User Group
- Education and Training Statistics Advisory Group
- Family Statistics Advisory Group
- Household Income and Expenditure Statistics User Advisory Group
- Indigenous Health Survey Reference Group
- Indigenous Social Survey Reference Group
- Information and Communication Technology Statistics Reference Group
- Innovation Survey Technical Reference Group
- Input-Output Statistics User Group
- International Trade in Services User Group
- Labour Statistics Advisory Group
- Methodology Advisory Group
- Mining User Advisory Group
- National Ageing Statistics Advisory Group
- National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data
- National Community Services Information Management Group
- National Corrective Services Statistics Advisory Group
- National Crime Statistics Advisory Group
- National Criminal Courts Statistics Advisory Group
- National Health Information Group
- National Health Information Group Statistical Information Committee
- National Health Survey Reference Group
- National Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee
- National Public Health Information Working Group
- Passenger Card Data User Group
- Personal Safety Survey Advisory Group
- Population Estimates Technical Workshop
- Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport Research Group
- Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers Advisory Group
- Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group
- Social Capital Advisory Group
- Statistical Clearing House User Group
- Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
- Technical Advisory Group on Indigenous Mortality
- Time Use Survey Advisory Group
- Tourism Statistics Consultative Group
- Transport Statistics User Group

State Government Groups

- Statistical Coordination and User Forum (New South Wales)
- Victorian Statistical Advisory Committee
- Social Statistics Consultative Group (Victoria)
- Queensland State Statistical Consultative Committee
- Statistical Policy Committee and Economic and Social Statistics Consultative Groups (Western Australia)
- State Statistical Priorities Committee (South Australia)
- Statistical Policy Committee and Tasmanian Statistical Advisory Committee
- Northern Territory Statistical Liaison Committee
- Australian Capital Territory Statistical Co-ordination Committee

Products and Services

Statistical Releases

The ABS has over 700 statistical releases each year, comprising monthly, quarterly, annual and irregular releases. While traditionally a release has been signalled by a printed publication, 2003–04 saw a continued increase in the number of electronic only releases.

Electronic products and data services

The ABS releases a large range of information in electronic form, and the ABS web site is becoming the primary means of releasing statistical information. Some of the ABS main electronic services are:

- the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>> which provides free access to a wide range of information including summary publications, statistics, news, media releases, directories, technical material, and information about the ABS
- AusStats, which provides online subscription-based access to tables, time series, publications, basic community and Indigenous profiles and datasets in electronic form. For those clients that do not want to subscribe, the ABS offers a secure e-commerce facility to all online products (and hard copy products) clients may wish to order on an ad hoc basis
- the ABS@ service, which delivers a comprehensive range of ABS information into the Intranets of key client organisations
- remote microdata access services which provide support for secondary analysis of ABS data whilst ensuring the confidentiality of individual survey providers
- publications available to subscribers by email (as well as in printed form)
- an increasing number of electronic publications available to users at their local library
- international trade services which provide detailed, customised trade data on both an ad hoc and regular subscription basis
- database products which combine large volumes of detailed statistical data with navigation and manipulation software, such as CDATEA 2001 (which contains 2001 Census data)
- the Consumer Price Index Infoline 1902 981 074, which provides access to recorded messages with the latest consumer price index
- an email notification service which provides details of ABS daily releases in subject areas nominated by clients
- a Real Simple Syndication (RSS) service which allows subscribers to access ABS statistical headlines from their desk top.

Publications

In 2003–04 the ABS produced 307 publication titles (including electronic only publications) comprising 727 separate releases (many titles are released more than once during a year).

Information about the full range of ABS publications is available in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products* (cat. no. 1101.0). Selected publications are available through the ABS publications subscriptions service and the full range are available through the ABS e-commerce facility, over the counter from ABS offices, and through the AusStats electronic subscription service.

Library Extension Program (LEP)

ABS publications are distributed to 519 libraries in hard copy and/or electronic form to provide a high level of free community access. The national library, state libraries, parliamentary libraries, all university libraries and a number of TAFE and public libraries participate in the LEP.

National Information and Referral Service (NIRS)

The NIRS, the ABS 'contact centre', provides a free, quick reference information service for queries received from the community via telephone, email, letter and fax. The NIRS also provides advice and referral to other ABS information services for more detailed statistics. In addition, the NIRS is the 'help-desk' for ABS clients using 'self-help' facilities on the ABS web site.

Information and Statistical Consultancy Services

More detailed statistics than those initially released in publications are usually available on request. Requests for additional statistical data are met through the Information Consultancy Service which is provided on a fee-for-service basis.

The Statistical Consultancy Service provides assistance in areas such as survey design, questionnaire design, sampling techniques and data analysis.

User funded surveys

The ABS conducts user funded surveys that are consistent with its role as a national statistical agency. Data collected in these surveys are protected by the confidentiality provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. Survey results are disseminated widely, not just to the client providing the funding.

Other services

The ABS provides a number of specialised services to meet the specific needs of clients, including:

- ABS employees who are 'outposted' to other government agencies to provide advice on statistical issues
- seminars and training on statistical issues.

Dissemination and Pricing Policy

Policy and principles

The Australian Government Cost Recovery Policy stipulates a basic set of information products and services, which would be funded by the taxpayer, should be provided to the community free of charge as 'public goods', and other information products and services beyond the basic information set should be cost recovered. Consistent with this policy, the ABS dissemination principles are to ensure that:

- all users, including the general community, have free and easy access to a basic set of official statistics
- where it is cost effective to do so, the costs of producing and providing information products and services that are additional to the basic set of official statistics, are recovered from the users of these additional products.

Objectives

The objectives of the ABS charging policy are to:

- reduce the need for the general taxpayer to bear those elements of the cost of the statistical service which have a specific and identifiable value to particular users
- encourage rational use of ABS products and services
- enable the demand for ABS products and services to be used as an indicator of how ABS resources should be used.

Community service obligations

The ABS community service obligation is to provide free and easy access to a basic set of official statistics comprising the findings of statistical collections and statistical reports on matters of public interest. This basic set is made available free of charge to the community via the ABS web site, the media, and libraries located throughout Australia. Members of the community can also contact the ABS and have simple data inquiries dealt with free of charge.

Approaches to cost recovery

Products that form part of the basic set may be provided in alternative formats on request by the user. Pricing is based on the marginal costs incurred in producing them in these formats, for example, the costs to the ABS to print and despatch a hard copy of materials to users.

For products beyond the basic set, such as customised extraction of data or access to confidentialised unit record files, pricing is based on incremental (or avoidable) costs.

The ABS may also price a limited range of products on a commercial basis. This occurs where such products and services compete, or may compete, with similar products provided by others.

Where an organisation seeks to on-sell ABS data or products, the ABS requires on-sellers to sign a licensing arrangement to ensure they provide ABS with an equitable share of the costs for the creation and dissemination of these products and services. The ABS provides explanatory notes and other supporting information, so that secondary providers can make information available to their clients which encourages and facilitates proper use of ABS data.

Top Structure

Australian Statistician



Dennis Trewin

Deputy Australian Statisticians



Peter Harper
Economic
Statistics



Susan Linacre
Population
Statistics

First Assistant Statisticians



Denis Farrell
Economic
Surveys and
Integration



Barbara Dunlop
Social and
Labour Statistics



Geoff Lee
Methodology



Siu-Ming Tam
Information
Management
and Census



Jonathan Palmer
Technology
Services



Graeme Hope
Corporate
Services

Regional Directors



John Struik
New South Wales



Vince Lazzaro
Victoria



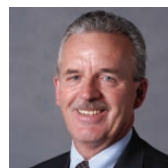
Malcolm Greig
Queensland
(Acting)



Alan Hubbard
Western Australia



Ian Crettenden
South Australia



Dick Crockett
Tasmania



Robyn Elliott
Northern Territory



Jon Hall
Australian
Capital Territory

Top Structure *continued*

Assistant Statisticians



Carl Obst
National
Accounts



Bronwyn Driscoll
International
and Financial
Accounts



Paul McCarthy
Prices



Paul Sullivan
Industry
Statistics



Robin Slater
Economic
Statistics
Data Centre



Steve Crabb
Integration,
Coordination and
Innovation



Ian Brodie-Reed
Population
Statistics
Infrastructure



Garth Bode
Labour and
Demography
Statistics



Bob McColl
Social
Conditions
Statistics



Sally Goodspeed
Health,
Education and
Crime Statistics



Frank Yu
Statistical
Services



Marion McEwin
Analytical
Services



Steve Matheson
Information
Services



Graeme Oakley
Data
Management



Paul Williams
Census and
Geography



Jenine Borowik
Technology
Application



Chris Duffy
Technology
Infrastructure



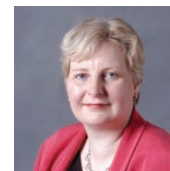
Don Bartley
Technology
Research



Greg Bray
Business
Strategies

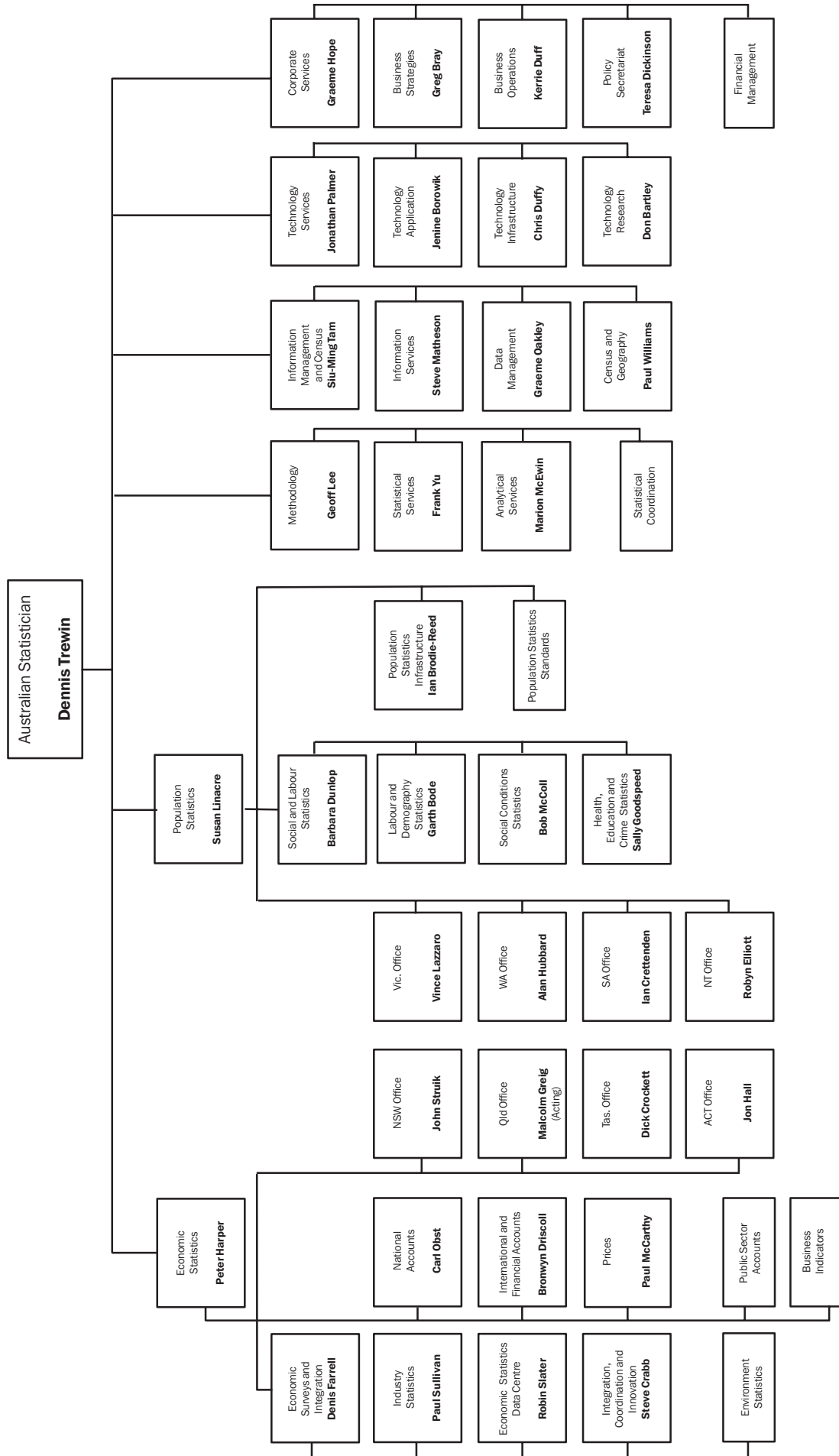


Kerrie Duff
Business
Operations



Teresa Dickinson
Policy
Secretariat

Top Structure *continued*



Contacts

For information about the Forward Work Program

Geoff Neideck
Director, Corporate Planning
Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Telephone: 02 6252 7191
Email: <geoff.neideck@abs.gov.au>

For information about the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC)

Teresa Dickinson
Secretary, ASAC
Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Telephone (02) 6252 5533
Email: <teresa.dickinson@abs.gov.au>

Internet address

<<http://www.abs.gov.au>>

For statistical information

National Information and Referral Service

Telephone: 1300 135070
Facsimile: 1300 135211
Email: <client.services@abs.gov.au>
Mail: Client Services, ABS
GPO Box 796
Sydney NSW 2001

For general information

Central Office, Canberra

Telephone: 02 6252 5000
Facsimile: 02 6252 7102
Mail: Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Counter: ABS House
45 Benjamin Way, Belconnen

New South Wales Office

Telephone: 02 9268 4111
Facsimile: 02 9268 4668
Mail: GPO Box 796
Sydney NSW 2001
Counter: 5th Floor, St Andrew's House
Sydney Square, Sydney

Victorian Office

Telephone: 03 9615 7000
Facsimile: 03 9615 7798
Mail: GPO Box 2796Y
Melbourne Vic. 3001
Counter: 5th Floor, CGU Tower
485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne

Queensland Office

Telephone: 07 3222 6022
Facsimile: 07 3222 6283
Mail: GPO Box 9817
Brisbane Qld 4001
Counter: 18th Floor
313 Adelaide Street, Brisbane
from October 2005:
CityGate
1062 Ann Street, Fortitude Valley

Western Australian Office

Telephone: 08 9360 5323
Facsimile: 08 9360 5955
Mail: GPO Box K881
Perth WA 6842
Counter: Level 15, Exchange Plaza
Sherwood Court, Perth

South Australian Office

Telephone: 08 8237 7555
Facsimile: 08 8237 7566
Mail: GPO Box 2272
Adelaide SA 5001
Counter: 7th Floor East
55 Currie Street, Adelaide

Tasmanian Office

Telephone: 03 6222 5999
Facsimile: 03 6222 5824
Mail: GPO Box 66A
Hobart Tas. 7001
Counter: Ground Floor
200 Collins Street, Hobart

Northern Territory Office

Telephone: 08 8943 2100
Facsimile: 08 8981 1218
Mail: GPO Box 3796
Darwin NT 0801
Counter: 7th Floor, AANT Building
81 Smith Street, Darwin

Australian Capital Territory Office

Telephone: 02 6207 0326
Facsimile: 02 6207 0282
Mail: Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Counter: 5th Floor, QBE Insurance Building
33-35 Ainslie Avenue, Canberra

ABS FORWARD WORK PROGRAM 2005-06 TO 2007-08

ABS Strategic Directions

Introduction

This publication describes the ABS Forward Work Program for 2005-06 to 2007-08.

The ABS establishes its work program in response to current and emerging statistical priorities of users, and within the context of our mission, organisational objectives and overall strategic directions. This Strategic Directions statement therefore presents the broad objectives the ABS has chosen to pursue which shape our priorities and the future work program.

Here those strategic directions relevant to the ABS work program for the next three years are described, in terms of: ABS-wide directions; Economic Statistics and Population Statistics focussed directions; strategic directions for statistical support activities; and strategic directions for data dissemination.

The statistical demands of the government and community are broad ranging and increasing both in volume and complexity. As Australia's national statistical agency, the ABS has a responsibility to respond to these demands, in the context of its mission and resource constraints.

Key drivers of ABS strategic directions

The ABS undertakes an ongoing program of consultations seeking input from key stakeholders and clients on their statistical needs, which includes asking them to identify and prioritise areas of demand that are currently unmet. The information from these consultations is used to inform internal priority setting both within specific areas of the organisation and across the whole organisation.

There is a need for the ABS work program to address emerging issues of importance for key clients including:

- Evolving client demands for data in a broader range of areas, at more disaggregated levels, delivered more responsively and cost effectively.
- Increasing complexity of the Australian economy and society, meaning that production of existing statistics is often commensurately more complex.
- Increasing plurality of data providers driving a need to ensure that the overall Australian Statistical System is coordinated and that the ABS role in this system is clearly defined.
- Increasing demands for access to microdata, longitudinal data and (in the future) linked data within a climate of concerns about individual privacy.
- A federal government agenda that is emphasising greater information sharing ('create-once, use-many') and coordinated policy and program delivery initiatives across Departments.
- Pressures to improve productivity, create a staff profile more appropriate to the ABS' future skill needs and attract additional funding to enable expansion of the work program.

In the second half of 2004 the ABS commissioned an external review of its strategic directions. Key findings from the review were:

- The ABS is highly respected for its credibility, impartiality, independence and the quality of its work and outputs. Stakeholders do not want that to change.
- Clients want the ABS to succeed - they want it to change and remain the main national statistical provider, while simultaneously providing stronger leadership to the Australian Statistical System, including advancing the National Statistical Service (NSS).
- The external environment in which ABS key clients require and use information has changed. The environment is placing greater emphasis on access to more information, while protecting privacy. At the same time, key client capacity to produce their own statistics has improved. While much good work is underway, ABS could be doing more to respond to those changes.
- Clients want the ABS to engage with them, but to do so more effectively than at present. They want the ABS to be more responsive.

Therefore the ABS needs to develop a stronger external focus and improve its capacity to respond to new demands. These challenges drive many of the ABS strategic directions.

ABS strategic directions

The ABS corporate plan provides a more comprehensive description of our objectives and the strategies we are adopting to realise those objectives. Some key current strategic directions are to:

- Develop and lead a National Statistical Service that delivers the statistics required by key users, no matter what their source.
- Respond better to client demands by:
 - improving engagement with clients so that we are better able to add-value to their work and decision-making
 - improve responsiveness in various ways such as making better use of existing data stores

ABS Strategic Directions *continued*

- as appropriate, seeking to expand the ABS resource base to allow us to address gaps in client needs.
- Increase internal capacity (skills, technology and processes) – to provide the ABS with greater flexibility to respond to external changes.
- Improve the process of determining priorities at a strategic level – to increase transparency and more effectively engage with clients.
- Better align the ABS human resource profile with current and future needs.
- Address the continued and increasing need to make productivity improvements.
- Increase the use of current and emerging technologies to improve statistical processes, data dissemination and organisational capacity.

Strategic Directions for Economic Statistics Group and Population Statistics Group

The two broad programs responsible for producing and disseminating ABS statistics are Economic Statistics Group (ESG) and Population Statistics Group (PSG). While each Group produces statistics specific to its subject matter, many of the broad strategic directions for the Groups are the same. Details of the current key strategic directions for ESG and PSG are provided below.

Develop and lead a National Statistical Service that delivers the statistics required by key users, no matter what their source; and improve the process of determining priorities at a strategic level to increase transparency and more effectively engage with clients.

The ABS will continue to work with other key agencies in the development, updating and implementation of information development plans (IDPs). These plans identify priorities for improving key statistics required for research and policy analysis by governments and the community. They establish shared responsibility between the ABS and major users and data custodians for collaborative work to meet these priorities and provide a map of the way forward.

For population statistics, ABS will continue development work on IDPs in respect of older people and ageing; children and youth; crime and justice; housing; heritage and arts; and rural and regional data. The ABS will continue to work with other key providers of statistics to implement the plans already developed in several other fields, such as education and training; health, including Indigenous health; and community services.

For economic statistics, IDPs will be developed for transport; tourism; science and innovation; taxation; water; and energy. Work will continue with the National Transport Data Working Group to develop metadata, standards and classifications for transport statistics.

Inter-jurisdictional agreements in sectors such as health, education and criminal justice provide a focus for information management and coordination of statistical activity in those fields. ABS will continue to work in partnership with the other agencies that are signatories to these agreements to address agreed priorities and promote statistical standards and best practice.

The ABS will continue to support significant work of other agencies in developing statistical products and capability. The Population Statistics program will provide advice and expertise through membership of steering and working groups associated with the Council Of Australian Governments' Review of Government Services Provision and Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage reports; and through key government funded surveys for which other agencies are responsible. These include the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics (HILDA) Survey, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), and the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC).

Work will be undertaken to ensure that the suite of statistical standards for population and social statistics is as complete and up-to-date as possible, with particular emphasis on those components that provide the basis for comparability of data across subject fields. Research leading to improved methodologies, testing strategies and survey practices will also be progressed.

The Economic Statistics program will maintain a high level of involvement in updating international standards for macro-economics, such as the Balance of Payments manual and the System of National Accounts, and industry standards such as the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006.

The ABS will also work with other agencies to develop the statistical value of their administrative data holdings, improve data comparability and enhance data access. In particular the ABS will support the availability of regional data through administrative data sources, including the development of products and access mechanisms such as the Regional Statistics Database.

ABS Strategic Directions *continued*

As well, the ABS will continue to work with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority and the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) on development of statistical capability, and the potential for expanded use of administrative or jointly collected data, to supplement or replace ABS directly collected data.

The ABS will continue to support work to evaluate the quality of statistical outputs from these initiatives in order to inform their effective use.

Respond better to client demands by improving engagement with clients so that we are better able to add value to their work and decision-making; and by improving responsiveness in various ways such as making better use of existing data stores.

The ABS has recently entered into a partnership with the Australian Institute of Family Studies and Department of Family and Community Services under which it will provide specific survey services and statistical advice for LSAC over a number of years. Possibilities for closer engagement with other agencies on an agreed program of statistical activity are also being explored, building on the success of models such as the national health survey partnership between the ABS and the Department of Health and Ageing.

The ABS is looking at the feasibility of enhancing the value of the Australian Population Census by developing a longitudinal view and bringing the data together with key data sources from within the ABS, as well as a limited set of external data sources. This initiative would greatly expand the amount and usefulness of data available to inform decision-making among governments and the community.

The ABS is continuing the development of a Business Longitudinal Database, which will draw together information on small to medium enterprises from a range of sources, including the ATO, to form a rich data set. The ABS is also developing a land parcel methodology for measuring natural resource management at the regional level. Work will progress on the annual integrated collection project, which aims to integrate the ABS annual (and less frequent) industry collections. This should enable the ABS to be more responsive to user requirements in this field of statistics.

Development is also continuing on data dictionaries, classifications and other standards for use in administrative as well as survey settings, notably in the fields of: crime and justice; education and training; and transport fields. These products will extend the range of tools available to improve data comparability across administrative collections and enhance relatability with survey data.

Increase internal capacity (skills, technology and processes) to provide the ABS with greater flexibility to respond to external changes and to better align the ABS human resource profile with current and future needs; and address the continued and increasing need to make productivity improvements.

There will be continuing emphasis on developing the skills of staff. Individual and section learning plans will be progressed and supported by a comprehensive program of statistical training. A high priority is being given to personal coaching programs.

Other strategies being adopted to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of outputs include the development of better integrated end-to-end information technology systems and processes for economic and household surveys, better statistical infrastructure, and improved work practices. Internal capability is also being strengthened through restructured work arrangements based on new models for managing surveys. The new models should improve provider management, increase timeliness for release of core products, and facilitate gains in other quality dimensions.

Effective use of new technology is a key part of systems development work. There will be continuing focus on realising the benefits from computer assisted interviewing, including the use of associated management information to better manage field operations.

ABS Strategic Directions *continued*

Meet increasing demand for detail and quality being placed on some key outputs, including population estimates and indicators of macro-economic activity.

The ABS will continue to investigate the use of administrative data to improve the accuracy of population estimates at State and sub-state levels. It will also undertake research into improved estimation of international migration.

For economic statistics, the ABS will continue to respond to government policy priorities and will undertake work to meet information needs for new and emerging economic issues. Improvements will be made to price indexes, by including measures of financial services in the Consumer Price Index; further expanding the Producer Price Indexes into the services sector; and improving the timeliness and accuracy of the House Price Index.

Micro-economic issues will be addressed by improving measures of productivity and business dynamics, including small business counts and information on business entries and exits. Further work will be undertaken to enhance industry data for: transport; tourism; science, innovation and technology; and for sustainable environment and rural and regional issues.

Information needs on government sector activities will be addressed by introducing the revised Government Purpose Classification (GPC) and continuing to improve detailed GPC information; completing work on harmonisation of government finance statistics standards and accounting standards; and working with the Commonwealth Grants Commission to identify and resolve quality concerns with respect to data used in the Commonwealth government's grants allocation process.

State government requirements for enhanced data will be met through introduction of a 'production' approach to annual Gross State Product estimates; and improving quarterly business indicators by supplementing ABS data with Business Activity Statement data. Spatial price indexes, which allow comparison of consumer prices across Australian capital cities, will also be developed.

Economic statistics data quality assessment frameworks will be developed, particularly for national accounts and balance of payments statistics. The statistical impact of the introduction of new Australian accounting standards will be carefully managed; and globalisation studies will continue to ensure that official statistics accurately record activities of globalised companies.

The ABS will review and update its directions for Indigenous statistics, and work with other key stakeholders to build on the work done to date concerning priorities and strategies for further improving these statistics over the next few years. A major priority will be to improve Indigenous enumeration in the 2006 Population Census and a strategy to achieve this is under development. Another priority will be to develop new standards and measures for reporting on Indigenous mortality, including trends.

Frameworks, indicators and analytic approaches to the multidimensional aspects of poverty, financial hardship and social exclusion will be developed. Other developments will include a more relevant and useful health survey program and a better integrated and more reliable crime and safety survey program.

A continued need to address provider load issues.

The ABS has had considerable success in recent years in reducing respondent burden, while at the same time significantly expanding the range of statistics available. Most of these reductions have been achieved through the use of administrative data and through the use of a broad range of smarter statistical methodologies, including methodologies aimed at improving relationships with respondents. The ABS has initiated a number of internal organisational, methodological and technological changes which have already reduced respondent burden across a broad spectrum of surveys or have increased the potential to do so in the near future. The ABS expects to make further gains in this respect over the next three years of its work program, as the full potential of recent initiatives becomes realised.

For both ESG and PSG, restructuring programs have provided opportunities to integrate collections and harness economies of scale across the full range of ABS surveys. The functionally specialised units which have been established under the new models will continue to deliver benefits through the application of expertise, and the implementation of new methodologies and technologies across ABS surveys.

ABS Strategic Directions *continued*

In ESG, the Business Statistics Innovation Program (BSIP) transition will be completed in mid-2005. BSIP has improved provider relations and reporting mechanisms, and has reduced provider load. BSIP will continue to deliver improvements in provider relations as the benefits of integrating business surveys management are fully realised. In PSG, the Household Surveys restructure is currently underway, and is already delivering improvements in provider relations and data collection and processing techniques.

Directions in access and use of ABS data

An important ABS objective is to increase the use of statistics for informed decision making. To achieve this outcome, a number of strategies have been developed to assist users to access and understand ABS data.

The ABS will continue to increase the use of its website as the principal dissemination channel for statistics. In addition, the ABS will provide free access to .pdf files of printed publications on its website, as announced in the 2005 Federal Budget. More detailed information will continue to be available on a user pays basis, and the ABS will work to improve the cost effectiveness of providing these data.

To support informed use of statistics, more information will be provided about the data available from the ABS. More contextual metadata will be linked to statistical data, to assist users to assess whether statistical data are fit for their specified purpose. To further support user needs, the ABS will promote better understanding and awareness of the range of information solutions available from the ABS.

The amount of detail available in confidentialised unit record files continues to expand, and the ABS will improve the facilities provided for authorised users to access these data.

Directions in statistical support

The ABS will continue to focus on supporting and improving the NSS by providing strong statistical leadership to statistics providers and users.

ABS methodological assistance will be targeted to assist other agencies with projects and activities that are of key importance to the NSS. The ABS will make greater contributions to various cross-government statistical networks by providing more assistance and statistical expertise.

The ABS program of external statistical training is of key importance in strengthening statistical capability and supporting and improving the NSS. The ABS will expand and broaden the program of external training it offers.

ECONOMIC STATISTICS GROUP

National Accounts

Program Manager

Carl Obst
Assistant Statistician
National Accounts
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	5.1
04/05	5.0
05/06	5.4
06/07	5.3
07/08	5.3

Staff usage 2003/04

57 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then National
Accounts

Other references

*Australian National
Accounts: Concepts,
Sources and Methods*
(cat. no. 5216.0)

Objectives

The National Accounts program provides quarterly and annual data about the level of economic activity and the structure of the Australian and state economies within a coherent system of concepts and classifications.

The main clients of the program are various Australian government agencies (in particular the Treasury), the Reserve Bank of Australia, state government agencies (in particular state Treasuries), international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, economic analysts in the private sector, the media and academics.

National accounts information is used to formulate and assess government macro-economic policies, both fiscal and monetary, to assist in allocating Commonwealth funds to state governments, to formulate industry development policies, to undertake financial and business planning and to facilitate international economic comparisons.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are the quarterly publication *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product* (cat. no. 5206.0), and the annual publication *Australian System of National Accounts* (cat. no. 5204.0). These publications provide current price estimates and volume measures of Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) broken down into its various components. In the quarterly publication, most data are published in seasonally adjusted and trend terms. Both publications also show estimates for the national income and capital accounts. Income accounts for the household and general government sectors are provided quarterly, while in the annual publication a complete set of accounts for all sectors including income, capital and financial accounts and balance sheets, are provided. The annual publication also includes a range of economic data by industry as well as capital stock and productivity estimates.

Quarterly estimates of state final demand and its components are included in publication 5206.0. Annual estimates of economic growth for each state and territory are published separately in *Australian National Accounts: State Accounts* (cat. no. 5220.0). The program also produces publications containing input-output tables and an annual tourism satellite account which highlights the contribution of tourism to the Australian economy.

Publications and articles on special topics are released regularly: recent examples being articles on the economic impact and recovery from the 2002–03 drought; the development of quarterly supply and use tables; measuring price change in the Australian economy; and an article examining 100 years of change in Australian industry.

The program also provides seminars, training courses and other information to assist economic analysts in understanding and using national accounts statistics.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- produce a satellite account for information and communication technology — due mid 2005
- complete the introduction into the national accounts of revised survey data arising from the implementation of changes to the statistical infrastructure — due end 2005
- complete a broad review of national accounts data quality including undertaking analysis of revisions to key national accounts data items — due end 2005
- undertake research as part of international work to update the System of National Accounts — due progressively to 2006
- improve the quality of the quarterly and annual state accounts particularly through developing annual chain volume estimates of gross state product using the production approach — due mid 2006
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 — due end 2006
- advance work on the measurement of non-profit institutions including development of sectoral accounts for non-profit institutions serving households — due end 2006
- continue development of natural resource and environmental accounting in conjunction with the development of comprehensive measures of changes in wealth — due end 2006
- improve the integration of national accounts and financial accounts data and develop new quarterly income data for the financial sector — due end 2006.

International Accounts

Program Manager

Bronwyn Driscoll
Assistant Statistician
International and
Financial Accounts
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	4.3
04/05	3.3
05/06	3.6
06/07	3.8
07/08	3.9

Staff usage 2003/04

46 staff years

References

Balance of Payments, and International Investment Position, Australia: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 5331.0)

A Guide to Australian Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Statistics (cat. no. 5362.0.55.001)

Objectives

The International Accounts program provides statistics on Australia's balance of payments, international investment position, and globalisation. The statistics are compiled from a range of statistical surveys and administrative data sources.

The main users of the balance of payments, international investment position, and globalisation data are the economic and industry analysts and policy advisers in Australian government agencies (in particular, the Treasury, the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Industry, Tourism and Resources, the Reserve Bank of Australia, and the Productivity Commission), economic analysts in the private sector, academics, the media, international organisations, and currency market dealers.

The data are used to analyse Australia's external performance, evaluate macro-economic policy and the performance of Australia's trade promotion and negotiation, undertake industry performance studies, analyse trends in interest and capital flows, foreign investment policy determination, and to understand patterns of investment into and out of the economy. Through forecasts of Australia's future trading performance with the rest of the world, the statistics have an influence on the exchange rate.

The balance of payments and international investment position are also inputs into the Australian national accounts, providing the external transactions accounts and the external assets and liabilities components of the national balance sheet.

Outputs

The balance of payments is a statistical statement that summarises the economic transactions of Australia with the rest of the world. The statistics summarise transactions in the current and capital account involving: goods; services; income; and intellectual property. Transfers (offsets to one-sided transactions in the current, capital or financial accounts) are also recorded in the current or capital accounts. In the financial account, transactions in financial claims on, and liabilities to, the rest of the world are reported.

The international investment position is a statement of the value and composition of Australian financial claims on, and liabilities to, the rest of the world. Its reconciliation format integrates the opening and closing investment positions with the transactions flows in the financial account of the balance of payments and with other changes in financial position (price, exchange rate and other volume changes). The currency and maturity of external debt are also presented.

Additional information on globalisation is obtained by analysing the characteristics and activities of Australian resident businesses and their majority owned foreign affiliates according to their foreign/Australian ownership.

The quarterly *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia* (cat. no. 5302.0) publication contains a comprehensive set of international accounts statistics including chain volume measures for trade in goods and services and data in seasonally adjusted form. Summary transactions of goods and services on a balance of payments conceptual basis, and more detailed presentations of exports and imports on a merchandise trade basis, are provided monthly in the publication *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0). Statistics in further detail are also available, including by commodity and by major trading and financing countries. The results of globalisation studies are published in information papers or as articles in *Australian Economic Indicators* (cat. no. 1350.0).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review seasonal adjustment of Balance of Payments (BOP) series, with particular emphasis on income — due September 2005
- set up mechanisms for more effective user consultation on international accounts — due October 2005
- incorporate into BOP changes to trade data brought about by the ABS's Merchandise Trade Reengineering and Customs' Cargo Management Reengineering projects — due December 2005
- review BOP compilation methods for insurance estimates, financial services, compensation of employees, migrants' transfers and the allocation of BOP components by country — due June 2006
- coordinate a joint collection of domestic and international financial data — due June 2006
- contribute to the development of new international standards for the Balance of Payments Manual and the System of National Accounts — due June 2007
- further the development of globalisation indicators — due June 2007
- improve the detailed conceptual and methodological information available to users — due June 2008.

International Trade

Program Manager

Bronwyn Driscoll
Assistant Statistician
International and
Financial Accounts
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04 2.4

04/05 2.4

05/06 2.2

06/07 1.9

07/08 1.7

Staff usage 2003/04

26 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then
International Trade

Other references

*International
Merchandise Trade,
Australia: Concepts,
Sources and Methods*
(cat. no. 5489.0)

Objectives

The International Trade program provides statistics on Australia's exports and imports of goods and services. Statistics on merchandise (goods) exports and imports are derived from records lodged by exporters and importers with the Australian Customs Service. Statistics on trade in services are derived from the Survey of International Trade in Services conducted by the ABS and a range of administrative and other sources.

International trade statistics (with some timing and coverage adjustments made to the merchandise trade figures to put them on a balance of payments basis) are important inputs into Australia's balance of payments and national accounts, and accordingly the ABS International Accounts and National Accounts programs are key clients of the International Trade program.

Key users of the statistics include analysts and policy formulators in Australian government agencies (in particular the Treasury, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, Austrade, and the Productivity Commission), state government agencies, analysts in industry associations and sectors, and importers and exporters of goods and services.

International trade statistics are used to monitor the performance of Australia's exports and imports, for formulating and reviewing trade policy, and in trade negotiations. They are also used to evaluate the industry and domestic market implications of Australia's trade activities and to draw international comparisons.

Outputs

The publication *International Merchandise Imports, Australia* (cat. no. 5439.0) provides summary information on Australia's merchandise imports for the latest reference month on a recorded trade basis. When the publication is released, normally 12 working days after the reference month, detailed merchandise import statistics are made available to clients.

Monthly information on exports and imports of goods and services on the preferred balance of payments basis is released in *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0). Seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are included, with analysis and comments on the monthly results. The publication includes a selection of tables showing merchandise exports and imports data on a recorded trade basis. When the publication is released, normally 21 working days after the reference month, detailed merchandise export statistics are made available to clients.

Merchandise trade statistics are classified by commodity, country of trading partner, state, industry of origin and broad economic category.

Feature articles explaining and analysing various aspects of international trade data, including more detailed information on trade in services, are made available on the ABS web site, normally concurrently with the release of a particular monthly issue of publication 5368.0.

The program produces the *Australian Harmonised Export Commodity Classification (AHECC)* (cat. no. 1233.0). Replacement pages are normally issued six monthly. The classification and replacement pages are released electronically via the ABS web site free of charge.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement revised merchandise trade systems and processes to cater for changes to imports arising from the Customs' Cargo Management Re-engineering project — implementation due third quarter 2005
- implement improved travel benchmarks for international trade in services statistics — due September 2005
- implement improved frame coverage for the Survey of International Trade in Services — due November 2005
- implement improved insurance and financial services benchmarks for international trade in services statistics — due June 2006
- subject to available funding, review the collection strategy and commence collecting greater country and mode of supply detail in the Survey of International Trade in Services — due September 2006
- implement revised international classifications (Harmonised System and Standard International Trade Classification) — due January 2007.

Financial Accounts

Program Manager

Bronwyn Driscoll
Assistant Statistician
International and
Financial Accounts
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04 1.5

04/05 1.4

05/06 1.4

06/07 1.4

07/08 1.5

Staff usage 2003/04

16 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Finance

Objectives

The Financial Accounts program provides statistics on the financial assets, liabilities, borrowing and lending of financial institutions, and on the stocks and flows of finance through the various sectors of the economy. The statistics are compiled from several statistical surveys and administrative data sources.

The main clients of the program include the main financial policy agencies (including the Treasury and the Reserve Bank of Australia), and financial institutions. Industry associations, analysts and state and territory Treasuries are also extensive users of the lending statistics.

The various outputs are used for analysis of monetary policy outcomes, for monitoring the flows in the financial system, and assessment of the financial performance of the various sectors or institutions of the economy. The housing finance statistics are used as one of the indicators of consumer sentiment and, together with the other lending finance statistics, are used as forward indicators of demand in the economy.

Outputs

The program produces the quarterly publication *Australian National Accounts: Financial Accounts* (cat. no. 5232.0), which is a component of the Australian national accounts. The financial accounts include the flows of finance through the sectors of the Australian economy during a quarter, demand for credit, statistics on the various financial instruments used, and the financial assets and liabilities of the sectors at the end of the quarter. As well as these aggregate accounts, the program produces statistics on managed funds, cash management trusts, superannuation funds, life insurance corporations, public unit trusts, securitisation trusts, common funds, friendly societies, and a range of tailored aggregations to meet the needs of individual clients. Venture capital statistics are also released.

The publication *Housing Finance, Australia* (cat. no. 5609.0) includes information on finance commitments for owner occupation and investment housing, as well as balances outstanding on housing finance loans. Finance commitments by banks and other financial institutions are covered, including whether the loans are at fixed or variable rates. *Lending Finance, Australia* (cat. no. 5671.0) provides monthly statistics on commercial, personal and lease finance.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review the content and production methods for lending activity collections in the light of priorities and resources available. Specifically, review the cost effective alternatives for meeting the demand for detailed product and geographic detail — due December 2005
- in consultation with data providers and users, prepare an information development plan for financial statistics — due December 2005
- undertake a review of collection arrangements from fund managers with a view to meeting requirements of both financial accounts and balance of payments users — due December 2005
- contribute to the development of new international standards for international and national accounts — the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM), and the System of National Accounts (SNA) — due progressively to June 2008
- plan and implement data collection and account compilation changes consequent to SNA and BPM standards changes in liaison with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority and major statistical users — due progressively from July 2007.

Public Sector Accounts

Program Manager

Paul McCarthy
Assistant Statistician
Prices Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	2.9
04/05	2.6
05/06	2.6
06/07	2.6
07/08	2.6

Staff usage 2003/04

32 staff years

References

Australian System of Government Finance Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 5514.0.55.001)

Objectives

The Public Sector Accounts program provides Government Finance Statistics (GFS) in respect of the Australian government, state and territory governments, their public non-financial corporations and public financial corporations, universities and local governments. The statistics are compiled predominantly from administrative data sources and a small set of statistical questionnaires.

GFS are used to monitor the financial performance of governments and to inform on the economic impact of government activities. They are also used to assist in the distribution of Australian government grants to state governments.

The main clients of the program include various Australian government agencies (in particular the Department of Finance, the Treasury, the Commonwealth Grants Commission, the Department of Education, Science and Training, and the Department of Health and Ageing), state government agencies (in particular state Treasuries), financial market analysts and international agencies. GFS are also an important input into Australia's national accounts.

Outputs

The project produces a number of publications each year containing statistics compiled in accordance with standards promulgated by the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, on the following:

- for all levels of government, an operating statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement. Key GFS accruals measures such as the Net Operating Balance and Net Lending/Borrowing are provided as the principal 'bottom line' measures in each operating statement. Net Worth is included in each balance sheet. A cash-based Surplus/Deficit is also produced as an extension to each cash flow statement. In addition, Net Debt and Net Financial Worth are included as memorandum items in each balance sheet
- statistics which indicate the extent and direction of both government and private expenditure in the field of education. Outlays on education by the Australian government, the state governments and local government authorities are shown by economic category
- revenue from taxation of the Australian government, the state governments and local government authorities in Australia.

The main publication is *Government Finance Statistics, Australia* (cat. no. 5512.0) which provides operating statements, balance sheets and cash flow statements for the Australian government, state and territory governments and their public non-financial corporations for the most recent financial year.

A new quarterly publication, *Government Finance Statistics, Australia, Quarterly, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 5519.0.55.001) was released for the first time in March 2004. It contains estimates provided for the quarterly national accounts and the key public sector aggregates from the national accounts publication. The publication is released the day before the *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product* (cat. no. 5206.0) each quarter.

The other publications produced are *Government Financial Estimates, Australia, Electronic Delivery* (cat. nos 5501.0.55.001 to 5501.8.55.001), which provide budget information for the forward year for each jurisdiction, *Taxation Revenue, Australia* (cat. no. 5506.0), and *Government Finance Statistics, Education, Australia, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 5518.0.55.001).

A concepts, sources and methods manual for accruals GFS was also released for comment via the ABS web site in 2003, as *Australian System of Government Finance Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (cat. no. 5514.0.55.001).

Quarterly statistics are compiled to provide general government and public non-financial corporations sector aggregates for input into the Australian national accounts.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- contribute to the harmonisation of GFS and accounting standards for the public sector — due end 2005
- develop tripartite agreements with the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC) and the state Treasuries to facilitate provision of timely, quality GFS statistics to the ABS and the CGC — ongoing through 2005–06
- complete a GFS procedures and implementation manual for practitioners of GFS, primarily in the ABS; this will accompany the GFS Concepts, Sources and Methods Manual — due 2005–06
- seasonally adjust the published quarterly series — due 2006.

Prices

Program Manager

Paul McCarthy
Assistant Statistician
Prices Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	10.6
04/05	9.4
05/06	9.9
06/07	10.0
07/08	10.0

Staff usage 2003/04

146 staff years

References

Australian Consumer Price Index: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6461.0)

A Guide to the Consumer Price Index: 14th Series (cat. no. 6440.0)

Labour Price Index: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6351.0.55.001)

Objectives

The Prices program is responsible for compiling the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Labour Price Index (LPI) which is an annual series comprising a quarterly Wage Price Index (WPI) and an annual non-wage price index, and a range of Producer and International Trade Price Indexes (PPIs and ITPIs respectively). The program promotes, through the provision of information papers, seminars, and other means, a greater understanding in the community of concepts, methods and uses of price indexes generally.

The main clients for the program's outputs are the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Treasury, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian government and state government agencies whose payments are indexed, economic analysts, and the general business community.

The main uses of the CPI are:

- as a general measure of price inflation for the household sector for macro-economic purposes
- for the production of volume estimates of components of the Australian national accounts
- as a basis for indexing pensions, superannuation payments and government taxes and charges
- as an input into salary and wage negotiations
- for the indexation of government bonds and business contracts.

The main uses of the LPI/WPI are:

- as a general measure of wage inflation for macro-economic purposes
- as a benchmark for national wage cases
- for the indexation of business contracts.

The main uses of the PPIs and ITPIs are:

- for the production of volume estimates of components of the Australian national accounts
- as a guide to future inflationary trends for macro-economic purposes
- for the indexation of business contracts.

Outputs

The main program outputs are quarterly publications:

Consumer Price Index, Australia (cat. no. 6401.0) provides estimates of the movements in prices of goods and services purchased by metropolitan households. *Average Retail Prices of Selected Items, Eight Capital Cities* (cat. no. 6403.0) is an ancillary publication to the CPI.

House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities (cat. no. 6416.0) contains estimates of changes in house prices in each of the eight Australian capital cities. Price indexes are presented separately for established houses and for project homes.

Producer Price Indexes, Australia (cat. no. 6427.0) provides estimates of the movements in prices of goods and services produced and used by businesses, and *International Trade Price Indexes, Australia* (cat. no. 6457.0) provides estimates of the movement in prices of Australia's exports and imports.

Labour Price Index, Australia (cat. no. 6345.0) provides quarterly estimates of the movements in the average wage and salary cost of a representative mix of employee jobs in the Australian labour market, unaffected by changes in the quality and quantity of work performed. The September quarter issue each year also contains annual estimates of non-wage costs (annual and public holiday leave, superannuation, payroll tax, and workers' compensation), as well as the overall labour price index which incorporates both wage and non-wage components.

A range of special data services is available on request.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- introduce into the CPI, indexes measuring changes in prices paid by households for a range of financial services including those incurred in respect of deposit and loan facilities and the purchase of shares — due October 2005
- introduce an updated set of weights into the CPI based largely on the 2003-04 household expenditure survey — due October 2005
- introduce hedonic price indexes for computers into the CPI — due October 2005
- plan for the introduction of ANZSIC 2006 for the producer price indexes and the labour price index — due December 2005
- review the structure of the PPI sample, including the spread of pricing points across time — due January 2006.

Business Indicators

Program Manager

Peter Harper
Deputy Australian
Statistician
Economic Statistics Group

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	4.1
04/05	3.6
05/06	3.5
06/07	3.5
07/08	3.6

Staff usage 2003/04

58 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Business
Indicators

Under Themes select
Industry, then Retail

Objectives

The Business Indicators program is responsible for the provision of a range of sub-annual main economic indicators. The indicators include:

- monthly statistics of turnover by retail and selected service industries
- quarterly statistics of company profits, inventories, sales and labour costs
- quarterly statistics of actual and expected new capital expenditure
- quarterly statistics of actual and expected mineral and petroleum exploration.

These data are essential inputs into the compilation of quarterly and annual national accounts and input-output tables.

The other main clients of the program include the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, various state and territory departments, banks, industry associations, and other financial analysts and commentators. These clients use the statistics as partial indicators of the national accounts and as important indicators of economic activity in their own right.

The program is also the data custodian for business taxation data provided by the Australian Taxation Office. These data are essential to ABS business surveys and the program has an important role in ensuring that the data are used strategically and in maintaining the relationship with the Australian Taxation Office.

Outputs

The statistical output of the program is summarised in the monthly publication *Retail Trade, Australia* (cat. no. 8501.0) and the quarterly publications *Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia* (cat. no. 5625.0), *Mineral and Petroleum Exploration, Australia* (cat. no. 8412.0) and *Business Indicators, Australia* (cat. no. 5676.0). The latter provides information on sales, labour costs, company profits and inventories. Each publication contains both national and state level data and estimates in original, seasonally adjusted and trend terms. In addition, the publications: Retail Trade, Australia; Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia; and Business Indicators, Australia; present data by industry and, in addition to current price data, present some estimates as chain volume measures.

The program also produces more detailed datasets that are available in spreadsheet form via the ABS web site and is responsible for a directory of capital expenditure statistics.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop an information development plan covering economic conditions — due July 2005
- plan for the introduction into each of the program's surveys of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due July 2006
- investigate the use of Business Activity Statement (BAS) data as a supplement to, or substitute for, data directly collected in the Quarterly Business Indicators and New Capital Expenditure Surveys — results of investigations due October 2005, implementation due September 2006
- investigate a range of changes — in conjunction with the use of BAS data — to the methodological infrastructure of the Quarterly Business Indicators and New Capital Expenditure Surveys such as: including nil-employed businesses; including public trading enterprises; and changing other aspects of the sample design and rotation — results of investigations due October 2005, implementation due September 2006.

Economy Wide Statistics

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04 2.3

04/05 1.6

05/06 1.9

06/07 2.0

07/08 2.0

Staff usage 2003/04

25 staff years

Objectives

The Economy Wide Statistics program is responsible for the provision of annual statistics which measure changes in the operations, structure and performance of all private and public trading enterprises. These statistics are derived from an annual economic activity survey and business income tax data from the Australian Taxation Office.

The information is used to provide 'economic indicator' statistics which monitor the economy in regard to the business cycle, and to support the compilation of the Australian national accounts.

The main clients of the program are the National Accounts Branch within the ABS and a range of Australian and state and territory government agencies, industry organisations, financial analysts and academic institutions.

Outputs

The main output of the program is the annual publication *Australian Industry* (cat. no. 8155.0) which provides national estimates of income, labour costs and other expenses, operating profit before tax, capital expenditure, industry value added, and business performance measures (averages, ratios, and profitability percentages) at the industry division level. Estimates for several of these variables are also presented by broad categories of business size and for non-employed businesses. State/territory estimates, and four-digit industry estimates at the Australian level, of key variables are also included with an experimental status.

Detailed information is also available in spreadsheet form via the ABS web site. Information tailored to specific requirements of users is also available by request on a consultancy basis. These requests typically include finer dissections of industry and/or data items or information presented by size classifications based on sales or other size indicators.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the economic activity survey, including adoption of the use of the Information Data Warehouse and the ABSest imputation and estimation systems — due October 2005
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due December 2005
- investigate better alignment of annual industry collections to enable the production of core data annually, and the production of 'alternate industry views' and commodity data (from an increased range of industries) on a rolling basis — due June 2006
- collect initial data based solely on the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due August 2007.

Business Demographics and Frames

Program Manager

Steve Crabb
Assistant Statistician
Integration, Coordination
and Innovation Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	0.6
04/05	0.7
05/06	0.9
06/07	0.5
07/08	0.5

Staff usage 2003/04

7 staff years

Objectives

The Business Demographics and Frames program is responsible for the provision of a range of information about the structure and performance of the economy, and strategic developments relating to the ABS central register of businesses, which plays a key role in the integration of economic survey activities.

Key external clients of the program are Australian and state government agencies and industry associations, a number of which are represented on the ABS Business Longitudinal Database (BLD) External Advisory Group which advises on the design, content and potential uses of such a database. Development of the BLD commenced in July 2003.

Government policy analysts and academics from tertiary institutions around Australia make extensive use of the previously developed business longitudinal survey database which was established to facilitate analysis of issues relating to the growth and performance of small and medium sized businesses. The data are used mainly to monitor the structure and performance of the business sector; and to assess the need for, and effectiveness of, policies relating to the small and medium business sector.

The ABS business register is based on Australian Taxation Office (ATO) Australian Business Register (ABR) data and various ABS and other, non-ABS, sources. Key roles for the program are to maintain the relationship with the ATO, develop and maintain the maintenance strategy for the ABS business register, and contribute to the ongoing development of the ABR maintenance strategy.

Outputs

The main outputs from the program are the biennial publication, *Small Business in Australia* (cat. no. 1321.0), annual updates of key small business statistics released as a special data service, *Small Business in Australia, Data Report* (cat. no. 1321.0.40.001), and the annual publication, *Characteristics of Small Business, Australia* (cat. no. 8127.0).

In addition to the ongoing releases above, the results of the Business Longitudinal Survey, which were released in *Small and Medium Enterprises, Business Growth and Performance Survey, Australia* (cat. no. 8141.0), are still actively used. These data form part of a database of information about small and medium sized firms. A Confidentialised Unit Record File was also released in 1999 which contains data included in the survey for the reference years 1994–95 to 1997–98.

The program is developing a strategy to produce a broader range of business demographic statistics, including statistics on business entries and exits, and is developing a new business longitudinal database from which a range of outputs will be produced.

A business register maintenance strategy has been developed based on a program of regular profiling of the larger, more complex businesses, with information for the remaining businesses sourced from the ABR. The ABS supports the ATO in developing and implementing a strategy for maintaining the quality of the ABR.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- commence the publication of an annual business entries and exits series using data from the ABR and from ABS surveys — due July 2005
- develop and produce an omnibus publication containing a range of business demographic statistics — due November 2005
- develop the Business Longitudinal Database using a combination of directly collected ABS survey data and administrative data from a range of sources, including the ATO — due March 2006
- investigate options for the redevelopment of the ABS business register to move from the current software platform — due April 2006
- redevelop the ABS business register — due June 2008
- develop and conduct the Characteristics of Small Business survey for the month of June each year, and develop and compile *Characteristics of Small Business, Australia* (cat. no. 8127.0) — due April each year
- provide technical and methodological advice to the ATO regarding the ongoing ABR maintenance strategy — ongoing.

Innovation and Technology

Program Manager

Steve Crabb
Assistant Statistician
Integration, Coordination
and Innovation Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04 2.5

04/05 2.6

05/06 2.0

06/07 2.4

07/08 2.0

Staff usage 2003/04

37 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Science
and Innovation

Under Themes select
Industry, then
Information Technology

Objectives

The Innovation and Technology Statistics program provides data to assist the understanding of the impact of research, experimental development, innovation and new technologies on economic and social outcomes. As an element of that activity, it provides measures of the penetration of selected new technologies, particularly information and communication technology, and maintains the Information and Communication Technology Reference Group which was established in early 2004.

Clients of the program include:

- Australian government agencies including the Australian Government Information Management Office and the Departments of: Communications, Information Technology and the Arts; Education, Science and Training; and Industry, Tourism and Resources
- state/territory government departments
- industry associations, research organisations and businesses.

Outputs

The output of the program is a range of statistical publications showing:

- the production of, and trade in, information and communication technology goods and services within the Australian economy
- the use of information and communication technology goods and services within the Australian economy and society
- Internet activity conducted through the Australian Internet Service Provider industry
- innovation activities undertaken within the Australian economy
- research and experimental development undertaken by businesses, government, universities and private nonprofit organisations
- biotechnology activity undertaken within the Australian economy
- human resources with selected qualifications and in selected occupations
- general indicators of the knowledge-based economy and society.

Special data services and outputs are also provided to clients on a user pays basis.

In addition, the program actively participates with national and international statistical agencies in the review and development of statistical standards and frameworks in relevant fields of statistics, including biotechnology statistics. As a key element of that activity, research papers and discussion papers are prepared and made available via the ABS web site.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop an Information and Communication Technology Statistics information development plan — due July 2005
- investigate the feasibility of collecting innovation, use of information technology and other characteristics required for longitudinal analysis in a single Integrated Business Characteristics Survey (IBCS) vehicle — due August 2005
- publish results from the 2003–04 survey of Research and Experimental Development for the Business sector — due September 2005
- develop and conduct a biotechnology component of the Research and Experimental Development Survey for the business sector, in respect of 2003–04 — due September 2005
- publish 2003–04, and subsequent annual results, on Farm Use of Information Technology — due October 2005
- subject to the feasibility of an IBCS (see above), publish results from the 2004–05 survey of Business Use of Information Technology — due March 2006
- publish results from the 2004 survey of Research and Experimental Development for the Higher Education sector — due April 2006
- publish Household Use of Information Technology results from the 2004–05 Multi-purpose Household Survey — due April 2006
- publish results from the 2004–05 surveys of Research and Experimental Development for the Government and Private Nonprofit sectors — due July 2006
- publish results from the 2004–05 Survey of Information and Communication Technology Industries — due July 2006
- conduct the survey of Innovation in Australian Business in respect of 2005 — due end 2006
- subject to a current review of Internet activity data collection from Internet Service Providers, publish results of future data collections — as appropriate and determined from the review.

Agriculture

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	2.9
04/05	2.3
05/06	3.1
06/07	3.9
07/08	2.6

Staff usage 2003/04

36 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then
Agriculture

Objectives

The Agriculture program aims to satisfy the statistical needs of agricultural policy makers and other key users of agricultural statistics by providing reliable and relevant information on commodity production, as well as the economic and environmental aspects of agricultural operations. The main collections include an annual agricultural survey, a five-yearly agricultural census, and a range of monthly, quarterly and ad hoc surveys covering specific aspects of agriculture and related activity.

The main clients of the program include a range of Australian and state government agencies, industry organisations, financial institutions, academic institutions, and private sector organisations providing services to the agricultural sector or involved with food manufacturing.

Government agencies such as the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the state Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources use agriculture data for the formulation and monitoring of policies in respect to the various activities undertaken within the agriculture industry, and for the management of the nation's natural resources and provision of support services to the agriculture and rural communities.

Industry organisations such as the National Farmers' Federation, the Australian Wheat Board, Meat and Livestock Australia and Horticulture Australia use agriculture data to assess the relative performance of the various industries and in the formulation of industry development policies. The data are also important for the development of marketing and export strategies.

Data from this program's collections are also used within the ABS in the compilation of the Australian national accounts.

Outputs

Estimates of the quantity of agricultural commodities produced each year, as well as some data on the use of inputs to the production process, are available from the annual commodity collection and published in *Agricultural Commodities, Australia* (cat. no. 7121.0) in June each year. Preliminary estimates for the main commodities are released in *Principal Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary* (cat. no. 7111.0) around November each year. Data related to the value of agricultural commodities are published annually in *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia* (cat. no. 7503.0) with preliminary value figures available in *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, Preliminary* (cat. no. 7501.0). Data showing the structure of agricultural industries in terms of the number of farms within each industry and the distribution of those farms based on both economic and physical size, are available.

These data are also available in electronic format in the AgStats product at Statistical Local Area level for census years (each five years) and at Statistical Division level in intercensal years. Summary data are also available annually as part of the Integrated Regional Database product.

Details of the number of livestock slaughtered for human consumption and the meat produced are available on a monthly basis in *Livestock and Meat, Australia - Electronic Publication* (cat. no. 7218.0.55.001). Other data relating to poultry slaughtered, the exports of meat, live sheep and cattle, and the production of milk and wool received by brokers and dealers, are published quarterly in *Livestock Products, Australia* (cat. no. 7215.0).

Details of stocks of grain held by bulk handling companies are available on a quarterly basis in *Stocks of Grain Held by Bulk Handling Companies and Grain Traders, Australia* (cat. no. 7122.0.55.001).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate integrating statistics of farm households included in the Census of Population and Housing and the Agricultural Census planned for 2006 — due November 2005
- investigate modelling of regional agricultural data using Agricultural Census data as benchmark data — due December 2005
- implement strategies identified through the Agriculture information development plan — due June 2006
- move to an Australian Business Register based frame for the Agricultural Census in respect of 2005–06 — due June 2006
- develop methods of presenting agricultural data in spatial form — due December 2006
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due June 2007.

Mining

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	0.4
04/05	0.3
05/06	0.5
06/07	0.5
07/08	0.6

Staff usage 2003/04

5 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Mining

Objectives

The Mining program provides annual data about the structure, performance and production of the mining, electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries, as well as quarterly data on private sector exploration for minerals and petroleum in Australia.

The main clients of the program include a range of Australian and state government agencies, industry organisations, and financial and academic institutions. Government agencies such as: the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources; the state and territory departments responsible for mining; Geoscience Australia; and the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE), use mining and exploration data in preparing briefs for the heads of their organisations, economic analysis, forecasting, the formulation of policies in respect of the various mining industries, and the management of the nation's mineral resources. ABS mining statistics are also used in a number of ABARE publications.

Industry organisations use mining and exploration data for research and monitoring developments in the mining industry.

Data from this program's collections are also used within the ABS in the production of economy wide statistics and the compilation of the Australian national accounts.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program include annual data about the structure and performance of the mining (including services to mining), electricity supply, gas supply, and water, sewerage and drainage industries. These consist of national estimates of income, labour costs and other expenses, operating profit before tax, capital expenditure, industry value added, and business performance ratios. State/territory estimates are produced for the electricity supply industry and, of key variables, for the mining industry excluding services to mining. The program also publishes data on the quantity and value of production of minerals as provided by state and territory Mines Departments, and quarterly data of actual and expected expenditure on mineral and petroleum exploration and the metres drilled for mineral exploration.

Structural and performance data are presented in the annual publications *Mining Operations, Australia* (cat. no. 8415.0) (which also includes the mineral production data); and *Electricity, Gas, Water and Sewerage Operations, Australia* (cat. no. 8226.0). The quarterly publication of exploration data is *Mineral and Petroleum Exploration, Australia* (cat. no. 8412.0). Tailored information is also available on request on a consultancy basis. Summary data, including key performance indicators, for the mining industry are released through the Mining theme page on the ABS web site. Serving as a portal to mining information, this theme page also contains other internal and external sources of data and articles as well as information about ABS statistical collections relating to this industry.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop an information development plan for the mining industries part of the program — due November 2005
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due December 2005
- develop a framework to enable more consistent reporting of commodity production and value data by the state and territory departments responsible for mining — due June 2006
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Mining and Utilities Surveys, including adoption of the use of the Information Data Warehouse and the ABSest imputation and estimation systems — due October 2006
- further investigate non-ABS data sources for supplementing, or substituting, direct collection by the ABS, or for use in data quality assurance and the preparation of articles — due December 2006
- collect initial data based solely on the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due August 2007.

Manufacturing

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	2.3
04/05	2.5
05/06	2.3
06/07	2.3
07/08	2.9

Staff usage 2003/04

36 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then
Manufacturing

Objectives

The Manufacturing program provides statistics on the structure, financial operations, performance and production of the manufacturing industry.

The main clients of the program are the Australian government and state government agencies, especially those with industry or business responsibilities. Umbrella industry bodies such as the Australian Industry Group and individual industry associations are also key clients.

Manufacturing data are used to monitor changes in the performance of manufacturing industries and to analyse potential effects of policy proposals. Numerous business, academic and general clients make use of data for specific manufacturing industries or manufacturing data covering particular states and territories (and regions in census years, currently every fifth year, with 2006–07 being the next proposed census year).

The program is a major contributor of data to other ABS programs, in particular the National Accounts program, the Economy Wide Statistics program, and the Culture and Recreation Statistics program. It also contributes to international industry statistics issued by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are an extensive range of annual structural and performance data about manufacturing businesses as well as quarterly commodity production data. National data include estimates of income, labour costs and other expenses, operating profit before tax, capital expenditure, and industry value added. State and territory data for manufacturing consist of estimates of wages and salaries, sales of goods and services, and industry value added.

Structural and performance data are presented in *Manufacturing Industry, Australia* (cat. no. 8221.0). Corresponding electronic state publications (cat. nos 8221.1.55.001–8221.6.55.001) are produced every fifth year, when the collection is conducted as a census. Sub-state data are also produced in census years to show regional activity patterns of manufacturing industries. Annual estimates of value of sales of commodities produced by manufacturing businesses are available on request on a consultancy basis, as are finer dissections of industry and/or data items. Some key performance indicators for the industry are released through the Manufacturing statistics theme page on the ABS web site. Serving as a portal to manufacturing information, the theme page also contains other internal and external sources of data and articles, as well as information about ABS statistical collections relating to this industry.

Sub-annual production data are available for a small set of commodities. The program also produces a range of detailed annual and sub-annual data about wine production and sales.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop an information development plan — due August 2005
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due December 2005
- investigate non-ABS data sources for supplementing, or substituting, direct collection by the ABS, or for use in data quality assurance and the preparation of articles — due March 2006
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Manufacturing Survey, including adoption of the use of the Information Data Warehouse and the ABSest imputation and estimation systems — due October 2006
- collect initial data based solely on the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due August 2007.

Construction

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	3.0
04/05	2.4
05/06	2.2
06/07	2.3
07/08	2.3

Staff usage 2003/04

45 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Building
and Construction

Objectives

The Construction program provides regular data on levels of activity in residential building, non-residential building and engineering construction. It also provides periodic statistics on the structure, performance and characteristics of the construction industry.

The main clients of the program are various Australian government agencies (in particular the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources), state government planning agencies, electoral authorities, industry associations, economic researchers, public and private forecasters of building activity, producers of building materials, land developers, major construction businesses and social/urban researchers.

Building and construction statistics are widely used for monitoring and forecasting the effects of economic policy and analysis of the economic cycle, and are an important input to the Australian national accounts. They are also used in the analysis of issues affecting the building and construction industries as well as the finance and investment sector. Building statistics are also used in estimating population change which is an essential input to regional planning processes and most economic and social models in use in Australia.

Outputs

The program produces a wide range of outputs. Building approvals statistics, which provide a leading indicator of future building activity, are released in the monthly publication *Building Approvals, Australia* (cat. no. 8731.0). This publication includes statistics on the number of new dwellings approved and the value of both residential and non-residential buildings approved by relevant authorities. More detailed data, including extensive state and sub-state time series, are also released each month via a suite of electronic products.

Other regular outputs on the level of building and engineering construction activity being undertaken are released quarterly. Preliminary estimates for both sectors are released in *Construction Work Done, Australia, Preliminary* (cat. no. 8755.0). More detailed statistics, including the number of new dwellings commenced, the value of building and engineering work done, and the value of projects commenced and completed are released in *Building Activity, Australia* (cat. no. 8752.0) and *Engineering Construction Activity, Australia* (cat. no. 8762.0).

The program also undertakes and publishes analytical work on an ad hoc basis which explores the relationship between building and construction activities, societal changes and general economic conditions and developments.

Periodically the program provides information on the structure and performance of the construction industry, including data on employment, wages and salaries, turnover, major expenses, capital outlays and profits.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate user interest in establishing a Construction User Advisory Group — due December 2005
- investigate the feasibility and implications of electronically collecting data from the administrative systems of large builders included in the Building Activity Survey with the aim of reducing provider load and improving data quality — due March 2006
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Construction collections, including adoption of the use of the Information Data Warehouse and the ABSest imputation and estimation systems as appropriate — due October 2006
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due June 2007.

Transport

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.5
04/05	1.5
05/06	1.6
06/07	1.6
07/08	1.6

Staff usage 2003/04

23 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Transport

Objectives

The Transport program provides statistics about transport related activities particularly relating to the composition and use of the road fleet in Australia. It also produces periodic statistics on the structure, performance and characteristics of the transport industry.

The main clients of the program are various Australian government agencies: in particular, the Department of Transport and Regional Services/Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics; the Commonwealth Grants Commission and the Treasury; state and territory government agencies; the National Road Transport Commission as well as industry and academic organisations.

Statistics from the transport collections are used to assist in policy and planning deliberations by governments and transport organisations, particularly in the areas of long term planning, the regulation of road transport operators and for accident exposure and fuel use analysis. Information about the vehicle fleet provides a measure of the stock of vehicles registered for road use at a point in time and supports the study of links between demographic change and vehicle ownership and use. Statistics on new motor vehicle sales provide an economic indicator of consumer confidence.

Outputs

The regular publications of the program are the monthly major economic indicator, *Sales of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, Electronic Publication* (cat. no. 9314.0.55.001), the annual *Survey of Motor Vehicle Use, Australia* (cat. no. 9208.0) and *Motor Vehicle Census, Australia* (cat. no. 9309.0). In addition irregular publications including *Freight Movements, Australia, Summary, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 9220.0.80.001) and *Rail Freight Movements, Australia, Summary, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 9220.0.55.001) are produced.

The program is also proactive in encouraging transport agencies to adopt a standardised set of transport frameworks and classifications to enable a comprehensive and coherent set of data to be shared among potential users.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- finalise the Survey of Motor Vehicle Use (SMVU) Fitness for Purpose Review (phases 2–3). This involves development and implementation of solutions to align the SMVU more closely with users' needs — due September 2005
- finalise the web page redevelopment, including the design of a magazine style approach — due December 2005
- investigate techniques for smoothing data to address some of the volatility issues identified in the Survey of Motor Vehicle Use publication — due June 2006
- analyse ABS 'time-use' data (next survey 2005) to gauge the time spent in transport related activities, travel variations between demographic groups, and between states — due December 2006.

Service Industries

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	2.5
04/05	3.0
05/06	3.2
06/07	5.1
07/08	3.3

Staff usage 2003/04

37 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Service
Industries Statistics

Objectives

The Service Industries program provides detailed information about the operations, performance and structure of Australia's service industries, including the not-for-profit sector, through a comprehensive program of periodic collections and use of non-ABS collected data. Statistics are produced for particular industries and activities in the following sectors of the economy: retail; wholesale; accommodation and restaurants; transport; telecommunications; property and business services; health; community services; culture; recreation; and personal services.

Collections of selected service industries are undertaken in response to specifically identified user needs. Clients vary from collection to collection, but generally include Australian government and state and territory government departments responsible for industry policy, and the government agencies and industry associations relevant to the particular industry under study. The information provided from these collections is used for industry planning and performance analysis and other government policy issues. The National Accounts program is also a key client of the program.

Outputs

The program produces a range of publications each year for selected service industries. These publications provide information on activities, income, expenses, operating profit before tax, employment and other key statistics for the industries under study.

Publications for the 2002–03 reference year covered construction, television, film and video production, music and theatre production, performing arts festivals, hire services, real estate services and waste management services.

Publications for the 2003–04 reference year will cover public libraries, museums, accommodation, cafes and restaurants and travel agency services.

Publications for the 2004–05 reference year will cover pubs, clubs, sport and gambling services.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Service Industries surveys, including adoption of the use of the Information Data Warehouse and the ABSest imputation and estimation systems — due October 2005
- review the forward work program as part of a broader review of annual industry collection requirements — due October 2005
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 — due December 2005
- incorporate retail and wholesale industry surveys into the Service Industries work program — due June 2006
- investigate the most appropriate use of taxation data in the service industries collections for the 2004–05 reference year onwards — due September 2006
- publish results from the service industries collections — due September each year.

Tourism

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	0.7
04/05	0.5
05/06	0.5
06/07	0.5
07/08	0.5

Staff usage 2003/04

8 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Tourism

Other references

*Framework for
Australian Tourism
Statistics - Electronic
Delivery*
(cat. no. 9502.0.55.001)

Objectives

The Tourism program is responsible for producing regular, timely and coherent data on tourism activities. It also undertakes a coordination and liaison role between tourism statistics' users and other areas of the ABS which produce tourism related statistics. Relevant data include the Australian Tourism Satellite Account, overseas arrivals and departures, tourism related exports and imports indicators, and data collected under the Service Industries program. The program is also responsible for the development and maintenance of tourism frameworks, standards and concepts.

The main clients of the program are: state and territory tourism commissions; the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources; Tourism Australia and Tourism Research Australia; the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism; key tourism industry associations; academic and research groups; and marketing and consultancy bodies.

Tourism data are used to assist in economic analysis and policy formation relating to tourism, to measure the size and structure of tourism related industries, to allocate state government funding to regional areas, and for local government planning and investment. The Survey of Tourist Accommodation data are a major input into the policy and planning activities of government and industry, particularly in relation to tourism activity in regional areas.

Outputs

The main output of the program is the quarterly publication *Tourist Accommodation, Australia* (cat. no. 8635.0). This publication provides detailed demand and supply data relating to hotels, motels and guest houses with 15 or more rooms, and serviced apartments with 15 or more units (derived from the Survey of Tourist Accommodation). As a result of the Tourism White Paper, the ABS will be expanding the survey to include smaller establishments and other accommodation types for the reference periods March quarter 2005 to December quarter 2008.

Other outputs of the program relate to research and development work in such areas as tourism statistics frameworks and classifications. The program undertakes a strong coordination role, working in partnership with key clients to ensure the availability of a suite of tourism statistics that meet the broad needs of users.

The program also actively assists in user education relating to *Australian National Accounts: Tourism Satellite Account* (cat. no. 5249.0), *Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia* (cat. no. 3401.0), *Short-term Visitor Arrival Estimates, Australia* (cat. no. 3401.0.55.001), tourism related services exports and imports indicators in *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0) and *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia* (cat. no. 5302.0), and the tourism related outputs issued by the Service Industries program.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review the Australian Standard Classification of Visitor Accommodation to ensure that it reflects the current tourism industry structure and, where relevant and possible, is integrated with international standards — due December 2005
- investigate the use of administrative data to reduce the load on accommodation businesses in the Survey of Tourist Accommodation, and increase the usefulness of the statistics — due July 2006
- undertake research and analysis aimed at developing a tourism investment indicator — due July 2006.

Environment

Program Manager

Denis Farrell
First Assistant Statistician
Economic Surveys and
Integration Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.8
04/05	1.4
05/06	2.2
06/07	1.5
07/08	1.9

Staff usage 2003/04

25 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Environment and Energy,
then Environment

Objectives

The Environment program provides a focal point for the ABS to meet the growing need for information on environmental aspects of socioeconomic activity, and integrates environmental, economic and social information.

Compendia and thematic publications have a general audience across government, business, education, non-government organisations and the general public because the publications give a comprehensive overview of the subject matter and the available information.

The household information about behaviour and practices is used by governments and non-government organisations to determine the uptake of activities directed at households minimising their impact on the environment, and to understand the motivations of people and households as part of policy and program development concerning environmental issues.

The environmental accounts outputs are increasingly of interest to government agencies, academia and other organisations. The information assists in a better understanding of the linkages between the availability, use and management of natural resources and economic activity.

Natural resource management statistics have been growing in importance in recent years and the ABS is responding with a flexible range of methodologies and survey topics.

Outputs

The regular publications of the program are:

- *Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices* (cat. no. 4602.0)
- *Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends* (cat. no. 4613.0)
- *Water Account, Australia* (cat. no. 4610.0)
- results from natural resource management surveys such as *Salinity on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4615.0), and *Water Use on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4618.0).

The publication *Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Accounts, Australia* (cat. no. 4604.0) was released in 2001 in respect of 1992–93 to 1997–98, and the next issue is due for release in 2006.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- finalise the development of a land parcel survey approach to target particular regions - due December 2005; and collect Natural Resource Management (NRM) data on a user funded basis — as required
- update the Energy and Greenhouse Gas Accounts — due second half 2006
- develop a new edition of *Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends* (cat. no. 4613.0) — due December 2006
- increase the emphasis on water statistics and water accounts through the development and implementation of a number of new annual collections covering water providers and water users — ongoing
- continue developing questions/modules on NRM for either independent NRM surveys or agriculture surveys — ongoing.

Economic Statistics Standards

Program Manager

Steve Crabb
Assistant Statistician
Integration, Coordination
and Innovation Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04 2.5

04/05 3.6

05/06 2.8

06/07 2.8

07/08 2.9

Staff usage 2003/04

29 staff years

Objectives

The Economic Statistics Standards program is responsible for the development and maintenance of the conceptual and operational infrastructure for the classifications, data items and business units used in the production of economic statistics. This infrastructure is defined in a consistent way so that users of ABS economic statistics can make valid comparisons of information compiled from different ABS statistical collections. In addition, the framework must facilitate the comparability of Australian statistics with international statistics.

A key objective is the adoption, by other government and private organisations, of the standards developed by the ABS. To support this objective, the program provides substantial advice and training to many of these organisations. A major theme of the program's activity will be the continuation of the cooperative work with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and other relevant government agencies to ensure that business related information gathered for administrative purposes can also be used for statistical purposes.

The program is actively involved with the United Nations Statistical Division in the continuing development of international economic classifications. In particular, the program will support the ABS aim of influencing the major reviews of the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) of All Economic Activities, and the Central Product Classification scheduled for completion by 2007. The ISIC review coincides with the review of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC), which is a joint review with Statistics New Zealand.

The main clients of the program are ultimately the users of economic statistics who benefit when the ABS and other organisations use consistent standards to produce and disseminate economic statistics.

Outputs

Outputs include: revised standards reflecting, amongst other things, changes to economic circumstances, business practices, legislation and international standards; published information papers on revised or new classifications, standard data items, or units; procedural documentation to help users work with support tools; and rulings on the application of standards and classifications to new or changed economic events or arrangements.

The program also produces, maintains and supports tools and databases to aid the creation, registration and use of standards and classifications. Tools include coding systems, correspondence tables, indexes and classification descriptor sets. Expert advice on classifications and standards, and metadata registration services, are provided to ABS areas that are developing surveys to ensure that business statistics from different surveys are consistent and comparable wherever possible.

Assistance is provided to the ATO on business registration, and application of classifications to business data.

Advice and training is provided to ABS areas and other government and private organisations on standards issues.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- assess the impact of changes to Australian Accounting Standards and amend standard ABS question wording as necessary — due 2005
- contribute to better integrated metadata management for economic statistics — due December 2005
- develop ANZSIC 2006 to ensure it accurately reflects current economic circumstances — due 2006
- contribute to the development of methodologies and concepts for developing significant alternate views of industry that cut across standard activity and commodity classifications — due December 2006
- contribute to the redevelopment of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities and the International Central Product Classification — due 2007
- plan and coordinate the implementation of ANZSIC 2006 into ABS statistics and assist external users to understand and manage the resultant impacts. Assist the ATO in introducing ANZSIC 2006 into the Australian Business Register — progressively to 2008–09.

POPULATION STATISTICS GROUP

Demography

Program Manager

Garth Bode
Assistant Statistician
Labour and Demography
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	3.5
04/05	3.3
05/06	3.4
06/07	3.9
07/08	3.3

Staff usage 2003/04

43 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then
Demography

Objectives

The Demography program has the following objectives:

- to produce statistics required by legislation
- to assist in the formulation and monitoring of government policies, and in the planning and administration of government programs
- to enable planning and market analyses by businesses
- to enable research and analyses by governments, businesses, academic institutions and others into the causes and consequences of population change.

Reflecting the use of population estimates for electoral and funding purposes, the main clients of the program are: Commonwealth and state Electoral Commissions; Commonwealth, state and territory Treasuries; and Commonwealth and state and Northern Territory Grants Commissions. Within the ABS, demographic estimates and projections are the basis for population survey benchmarks. Other clients include agencies involved in issues associated with migration and multicultural affairs, health, the Indigenous population, family and community services, the environment and international tourism.

Outputs

The key output is quarterly state and territory population estimates published in *Australian Demographic Statistics* (cat. no. 3101.0).

The program produces estimates of the total population by age, sex, country of birth, marital status and geographical distribution; estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population; and estimates of families and households. Regular statistics are also produced on births, deaths, marriages, divorces, overseas arrivals and departures, and internal migration. Projections of population, families and households according to specified demographic assumptions are published on a regular basis and produced for individual clients. Population benchmarks are provided for use in ABS and other population surveys. In addition to producing demographic statistics, courses on understanding demographic data are conducted and an electronic newsletter is sent to major clients.

Major publications apart from *Australian Demographic Statistics* (cat. no. 3101.0) include: *Births, Australia* (cat. no. 3301.0); *Deaths, Australia* (cat. no. 3302.0); *Migration, Australia* (cat. no. 3412.0); *Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand* (cat. no. 3218.0); *Population Projections, Australia* (cat. no. 3222.0); and, *Household and Family Projections, Australia* (cat. no. 3236.0). In addition, an extensive range of historical data are released online through AusStats in *Australian Historical Population Statistics* (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- in conjunction with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, participate in a review of data sources and statistical methods used in measuring international movements and migration — due December 2005
- investigate alternative data sources and methods for determining intercensal interstate migration — due December 2005
- assess, prepare and implement response to the review of processes and sources for deriving estimated resident population — report due March 2005, ABS response due August 2005, implementation thereafter
- release state and territory demographic summary indicators in electronic format to accompany national releases — due progressively to June 2006
- review business practices and processes for acquiring and processing administrative data on births, deaths and marriages — due July 2006
- implement quality improvement program for processing administrative data on births, deaths and marriages — due July 2006
- investigate methods of independently measuring the quality of the 2006 Census count for Indigenous communities and remote Australia — due August 2006
- finalise methodological research and implement new methods for estimating net overseas migration — due December 2005, review due December 2006
- develop, conduct and process 2006 Census Post-enumeration Survey — due early 2007
- prepare Australian, state and territory population estimates based on the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing — preliminary results due June 2007, final results due March 2008
- investigate data sources and methods for improving the quality of demographic indicators (such as mortality and fertility estimates), population estimates and projections for the Indigenous population — ongoing
- support the Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages in areas impacting on demographic statistical data, including the identification of Indigenous people in birth and death registrations and the provision of clean data to the ABS — ongoing.

Labour Statistics

Program Manager

Garth Bode
Assistant Statistician
Labour and Demography
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04 6.6

04/05 5.7

05/06 6.0

06/07 6.1

07/08 5.8

Staff usage 2003/04

88 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Labour

Objectives

The Labour Statistics program provides information about the structure and performance of the labour market. The program produces interrelated statistics on labour supply (such as labour force participation, unemployment and broader measures of labour underutilisation); labour demand (such as employment, job vacancies and labour costs); and industrial relations.

Labour statistics are used extensively in the analysis, evaluation, and monitoring of: the economy; the labour market; a wide range of government policies and programs (such as employment, income support, industrial relations); and population groups of particular concern (such as women, younger persons, older persons, Indigenous people). Statistics on labour costs are also used in compiling the Australian National Accounts.

The main clients of the program are Commonwealth government agencies (including the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Family and Community Services, and the Commonwealth Grants Commission), state and territory government agencies, industry associations, trade unions and academic researchers.

Outputs

Statistics on labour force participation, employment and unemployment are published monthly in *Labour Force, Australia* (cat. no. 6202.0). More detailed labour force information covering age, country of birth, family status, industry, occupation, hours of work and duration of unemployment are released on the ABS web site either monthly or quarterly. Broad measures of labour underutilisation are updated annually. Statistics on particular aspects of the Australian labour market, including labour force experience, working arrangements, forms of employment, labour mobility, underemployment, job search experience, and marginal attachment to the labour force, are published periodically.

The program produces regular statistics on earnings, employee benefits and labour costs. Statistics on average weekly earnings of employees are published quarterly in *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia* (cat. no. 6302.0). Distributional data on employee earnings and hours, data on occupational earnings, and data on award and agreement coverage are available less frequently. Data on major labour costs are available six-yearly. Information on the number of employees and total quarterly employee earnings for the public sector (by state and territory, level of government and industry group) is available quarterly.

Statistics on job vacancies are published quarterly in *Job Vacancies, Australia* (cat. no. 6354.0). Data on industrial disputes, including working days lost, cause of dispute and reason work resumed, are also published quarterly.

The quarterly publication *Australian Labour Market Statistics* (cat. no. 6105.0) brings together a wide range of ABS labour data covering demographic characteristics of the labour force, employment and unemployment, labour underutilisation, earnings and labour costs, industrial relations and job vacancies. It also includes feature articles on current labour market issues.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- coordinate a review of statistics of employee remuneration, with particular focus on the value of 'salary sacrificed' — due end 2005
- commence regular dissemination of estimates of labour force characteristics of the Indigenous population from the labour force survey — due end 2005
- publish results from the survey of Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation — due December 2005
- develop and implement improved estimation method for families estimates from the labour force survey — due July 2006
- undertake further development of measures of labour underutilisation by producing quarterly series and by including additional population groups — due July 2006
- develop, select and implement a new sample for the monthly population survey — due end 2007
- implement changes to survey program resulting from the review of statistics of working arrangements — due progressively 2006–2008.

Health Statistics

Program Manager

Sally Goodspeed
Assistant Statistician
Health, Education and
Crime Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	3.0
04/05	3.2
05/06	2.1
06/07	1.8
07/08	1.7

Staff usage 2003/04

38 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Health

Under Themes select
People, then Disability,
Ageing and Carers

Objectives

The Health program provides information about aspects of the health and wellbeing of Australia's population, and about health related services. This includes statistics relating to the health, illness and mortality, disability, and other aspects of social wellbeing of the population. The program focuses on population subgroups such as women, men, children, youth, older people, people with disabilities and the people who care for them.

Statistics on health describe an important aspect of the circumstances and situation of the population and are used to monitor changes in social conditions and use of related services over time. They support policy development, program delivery and evaluation of key government and non-government agencies involved in health, community and family services. They provide information on needs for, and impacts of, programs and service provision, and can be used to assess areas of unmet need. They are heavily used in research related to health and community issues.

The main clients of the program are Australian government agencies (including the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Family and Community Services, Centrelink, the Office of the Status of Women, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and the Australian Institute of Family Studies), state government agencies, academic and research institutions and social welfare organisations, including those providing health and community services.

Outputs

Outputs of the program include publications from a range of social surveys and administrative data collections in the areas of health (including causes of death), disability, and carers. Statistical outputs are also available as special tabulations, and through access to microdata such as confidentialised unit record files.

Information on the health status of the population and associated risk factors is presented in *National Health Survey: Summary of Results* (cat. no. 4364.0). Statistics on the level and causes of mortality are available annually in *Causes of Death, Australia* (cat. no. 3303.0). Data on the activities of, and patients treated in, private acute, psychiatric and day hospitals are published in *Private Hospitals, Australia* (cat. no. 4390.0) annually. Information on the nature and extent of disability and associated needs for care and support, as well as the impact of the caring role on carers, is available in *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings* (cat. no. 4430.0). The health statistics program also releases analytical articles and publications drawing on the range of information sources available in health.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review and consider options to improve the range of health data collected in ABS health surveys — prior to the development of the 2007–08 National Health Survey — due end 2005
- disseminate further results from the 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers — due end 2005
- process and disseminate results from the 2004–05 National Health Survey — due early 2006
- continue development of a number of computer-aided telephone interview modules to provide a basis for greater harmonisation in state and territory telephone-based health surveys in conjunction with the Australian government Department of Health and Ageing, and state and territory jurisdictions. Modules being prepared cover demographics, asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, alcohol and tobacco — due June 2006
- include a disability module in the 2006 Census — due August 2006
- improve the extent of analysis of data related to mortality — ongoing.

Education and Training Statistics

Program Manager

Sally Goodspeed
Assistant Statistician
Health, Education and
Crime Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.4
04/05	1.4
05/06	2.2
06/07	1.9
07/08	1.4

Staff usage 2003/04

16 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Education
and Training

Objectives

The Education and Training Statistics program covers the activities of the National Centre for Education and Training Statistics (NCETS) as well as the development and compilation of statistics from a number of national collections, including conduct of a number of surveys relevant to the education and training field.

The Education and Training Statistics Information Development Plan released in September 2004: *Measuring Learning in Australia - Plan to Improve the Quality, Coverage and Use of Education and Training Statistics* (cat. no. 4231.0), provides a statement of agreement on current priority information needs, and the strategies that the major stakeholders are implementing to address them.

Other key elements of the program in this field include the development and conduct of the annual National Schools Statistics collection, and the regular conduct of a number of surveys about education, training and work, and the work of the National Education and Training Statistics Unit. This Unit, in partnership with other government agencies, promotes greater comparability of information across the different education and training sectors. In addition to these activities, the ABS analyses data on relevant topics.

The main clients of the education and training statistics program are: the Australian government Department of Education, Science and Training; state and territory government departments responsible for education and training; the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs; academic and research institutions; and education providers. The ABS is advised on emerging issues and priorities in education and training by the Education and Training Statistics Advisory Group, comprising experts in education and training drawn from a range of government and non-government agencies, including education researchers and education providers.

Outputs

The key outputs of the program are:

- statistics released annually in *Schools, Australia* (cat. no. 4221.0), and *Education and Work, Australia* (cat. no. 6227.0). Less frequent publications include: *Education and Training Indicators, Australia* (cat. no. 4230.0); *Education and Training Experience, Australia* (cat. no. 6278.0); *Employer Training Expenditure and Practices, Australia* (cat. no. 6362.0); and outputs from the Adult Literacy Surveys (cat. nos 4226.0 and 4228.0)
- a statistical information and dissemination service for education and training statistics; the electronic publication *A Directory of Education and Training Statistics* (cat. no. 1136.0); and the maintenance of an education and training statistics theme page on the ABS web site
- activities aimed at developing and promoting national classifications and standards for education and training statistics, including *Information Paper: Measuring Learning in Australia: Dictionary of Standards for Education and Training Statistics* (cat. no. 4232.0.55.001)
- statistical leadership, including the production and maintenance of *Information Paper: Measuring Learning in Australia - Plan to Improve the Quality, Coverage and Use of Education and Training Statistics* (cat. no. 4231.0) which was developed by the National Education and Training Statistics Unit, a joint initiative of all state, territory and Australian government education and training departments, the Australian National Training Authority and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and which involved extensive consultation with stakeholders.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop and conduct the Survey of Education and Training — due February 2006
- implement the priority actions identified in the first three-yearly review of the ABS Plan to Improve the Quality, Coverage and Use of Education and Training Statistics — commence late 2006
- develop and conduct the Survey of Adult Literacy and Life Skills — due mid 2007
- conduct the annual Survey of Education and Work; and undertake a review of the Surveys of Education and Training, and Education and Work, prior to the 2009 enumeration of both surveys — due May 2009
- review and analyse economic statistics on education and training — ongoing
- undertake projects for the National Education and Training Statistics Unit Management Board on: quality statistics on early childhood education; labour market outcomes; developing a skills and qualifications profile of the population; and apparent retention rates and alternative measures of participation, engagement and attainment — ongoing
- further develop *Measuring Learning in Australia - Dictionary of Standards for Education and Training Statistics*, undertaking comparisons with the major sectoral collections, and assess the need for development of new standards for other variables — ongoing.

Crime and Justice Statistics

Program Manager

Sally Goodspeed
Assistant Statistician
Health, Education and
Crime Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.9
04/05	1.9
05/06	2.0
06/07	1.9
07/08	1.8

Staff usage 2003/04

26 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Crime
and Justice

Objectives

The ABS Crime and Justice Statistics program leads national statistical activity relating to crime and justice aimed at developing and improving the information available in this field. An important output to be released in 2005 will be *Information Paper: National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice* (cat. no. 4520.0). This represents the results of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in crime and justice statistics, and presents agreed priorities and a plan of action for the development of crime and justice information by all agencies working in this field.

The National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics (NCCJS) has a work program which is progressed through the three independent user-funded statistical units which operate within it: the National Crime Statistics Unit; the National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit; and the National Corrective Services Statistics Unit. These units compile and publish national statistics on recorded crime, courts and corrections, and work to continue to improve the quality of these collections in cooperation with statistical practitioners in the jurisdictions. This work is overseen by the boards of management for each of the statistical units which include jurisdictional representatives responsible for police services, courts administration and corrective services.

The ABS also oversees a survey program in the field of crime and justice statistics which in 2005–06 will include the 2005 National Crime and Safety Survey, and the 2005 Personal Safety Survey (PSS). The PSS will provide updated results for comparison with the 1996 Women's Safety Survey, as well as, for the first time, collecting similar information from men. The ABS is also working jointly with other agencies collecting crime information through significant national surveys to review the national program of surveys and ensure an integrated approach where possible.

The main clients of the Crime and Justice Statistics program include the Australian Attorney-General's Department and the state and territory agencies responsible for police services, courts administration and corrective services. The Council of Australian Governments 'Review of Commonwealth and State Service Provision' makes extensive use of ABS crime and justice data in its performance management review process. Agencies responsible for criminal justice research and policy are also significant users. These include the Australian Institute of Criminology, the various state and territory agencies responsible for crime and justice statistics and research, and the national common police services including the Australian Crime Commission and the Australasian Centre for Policing Research.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- a regular series of statistical publications and other products on crime and justice from major ABS collections, including *Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia* (cat. no. 4510.0) published annually; *Criminal Courts, Australia* (cat. no. 4513.0) published annually; *Corrective Services, Australia* (cat. no. 4512.0) published quarterly; *Prisoners in Australia* (cat. no. 4517.0) published annually; and *Crime and Safety, Australia* (cat. no. 4509.0) published three-yearly
- statistical activities to develop and promote national standards for crime and justice statistics. These include data dictionaries, guidelines and other information and training made available to jurisdictions to guide the collection and preparation of statistical information from their administrative collections
- a quality assurance framework that incorporates auditing and reporting quality
- a statistical information and dissemination service for crime and justice data.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- complete the conduct of the 2005 National Crime and Safety Survey — due April 2006
- complete the conduct of the 2005 Personal Safety Survey — due July 2006
- implement the priority actions identified for the ABS in *Information Paper: National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice* (cat. no. 4520.0), and conduct regular updates of progress against the priorities for crime and justice statistics — ongoing
- develop a Recorded Crime Offender Based collection which will include details of persons (10 years and over) who come to the attention of police and resultant actions; and further develop the Criminal Courts collection to include the Children's Criminal Courts jurisdiction — ongoing
- develop a census of Community Based Corrections clients — including people who are under orders — ongoing
- develop Data Dictionaries for Recorded Crime and Corrective Services — ongoing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.7
04/05	2.1
05/06	2.8
06/07	2.5
07/08	2.5

Staff usage 2003/04

23 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Indigenous

Objectives

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics program covers the activities of the ABS National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (NCATSIS) together with the development and conduct of ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander surveys. NCATSIS has responsibility for leadership and coordination of national statistical activity about Australia's Indigenous peoples, both across the ABS and more broadly, including consultation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and working in collaboration with a broad range of external agencies to achieve relevant and appropriate information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NCATSIS undertakes analyses of data on selected topics of major social significance in the field and, through written reports, informs users of the outcomes of these analyses. NCATSIS plays a role in data development, and is implementing an Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy to maintain rapport with Indigenous communities and organisations on data collection and use.

The key elements in the program include: the development, conduct and dissemination of results from the six-yearly National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS); and the six-yearly National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS), both designed to produce national and state/territory estimates for remote and non remote areas; and the development of the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy for the Census.

The main clients of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics program are Australian government agencies, state government agencies, academic and research institutions, Indigenous communities and Indigenous organisations.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- publications and other products from major ABS collections such as National Health Survey: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Results, Australia* (cat. no. 4715.0), *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* (cat. no. 4714.0), and *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians* (cat. no. 4713.0)
- statistical research and analysis on a range of Indigenous topics, including biennial compendium reports (in particular, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (cat. no. 4704.0) published jointly with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare)
- statistical leadership to improve Indigenous statistics on population, mortality, health, housing, community services, education, employment, and law and justice
- providing subject matter expertise to other areas of the ABS conducting census and survey collections, and analyses of Indigenous data
- coordinating and promoting improvements in Indigenous statistics from administrative collections.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- produce, in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the fifth (and enhanced) compendium report on *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (cat. no. 4704.0) — due August 2005
- complete the 2004–05 NATSIHS — due February 2006
- develop and conduct a Community Infrastructure Needs Survey in 2006 on behalf of the Department of Family and Community Services — due February 2007
- develop the 2008 NATSISS — commencing July 2006
- improve, and report on, the Indigenous status in key administrative sources — ongoing
- ramp up the Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy to build stronger relationships with Indigenous communities by enhancing Indigenous organisation and community awareness and use of available data, and manage provider load on communities — ongoing
- support a wide range of clients in accessing and analysing Indigenous statistics from ABS and administrative collections, including for the reports: Review of Government Services; and Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage — ongoing.

Living Conditions Statistics

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.1
04/05	1.0
05/06	0.8
06/07	0.8
07/08	0.8

Staff usage 2003/04

13 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Economic
Wellbeing of Households

Other references

*Household Expenditure
Survey, Australia: User
Guide* (cat. no. 6527.0)

Objectives

The Living Conditions Statistics program provides information about the material living conditions of the population within a framework of areas of social concern and population groups at risk of disadvantage. Household income, wealth, expenditure, consumption, housing, superannuation and other aspects of material living conditions are central to monitoring material wellbeing. Related areas of measurement and analysis include financial hardship and financial stress which help to provide a wider picture of the material circumstances and living conditions of Australians.

Material wellbeing statistics describe the circumstances and situation of the population and monitor changes in living conditions over time. They are used to support policy development, program delivery and program evaluation of key government agencies involved in social security, taxation, housing, and community and family services provided in support of people in need. They provide information on needs for, and impacts of, programs and service provision, and can be used to assess areas of unmet need.

The main clients of the program are Australian government agencies (including the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Treasury, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Centrelink, and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), state government agencies, academic and research institutions and social welfare organisations.

Outputs

Outputs of the program include a range of products from several social surveys in the areas of income, wealth, household expenditure, household consumption and superannuation as well as from multi-topic surveys of the general population. The product suite includes publications, spreadsheets, data cubes, special tabulations on request, and confidentialised unit record files with varying detail released on CD-ROM, through the ABS Remote Access Data Laboratory or for analysis on-site.

Information on the economic wellbeing of the population, which is derived from household income and expenditure surveys, is first published in *Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results* (cat. no. 6530.0) and in *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia* (cat. no. 6523.0).

Information about the housing characteristics of Australians which is derived from household income and housing surveys is first published in *Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia* (cat. no. 4130.0.55.00).

Information about the superannuation of Australians which is derived from the Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation is first published in *Superannuation: Coverage and Financial Characteristics, Australia* (cat. no. 6360.0).

Information and analysis about living conditions are also published in a wide variety of omnibus releases, including analysis of population census as well as survey datasets. Information and analysis about financial stress and financial hardship derived from expenditure surveys and from multi-topic surveys are released both in survey specific products and in omnibus releases.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- compile and publish results from the 2003–04 Survey of Income and Housing — due September 2005
- compile and publish results from the 2003–04 Household Expenditure Survey — due September 2005
- work with stakeholders to complete an information development plan for housing statistics — due March 2006
- undertake a fiscal incidence study (the allocation of direct and indirect taxes and government benefits to households) based on data from the 2003–04 Household Expenditure Survey — due June 2006
- revise ABS household income statistics standards to reflect new international standards promulgated through a resolution of the governing body of the International Labour Organisation for household income and expenditure statistics — due June 2006
- develop and conduct the 2005–06 Survey of Income and Housing — enumeration due July 2006
- in cooperation with other Australian and international agencies, develop a framework to guide the definition of a cohesive set of indicators of poverty, financial hardship and social exclusion/deprivation — due December 2006
- develop and conduct the 2006–07 Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation — enumeration due July 2007.

Family and Community Statistics

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.3
04/05	1.1
05/06	1.1
06/07	1.0
07/08	0.7

Staff usage 2003/04

15 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Family and
Community Statistics

Under Themes select
People, then Social
Capital

Objectives

The Family and Community Statistics program provides information about family and community wellbeing within a framework of areas of social concern and population groups. The program provides statistics from a variety of collections including the population census, the general social survey, the monthly labour force survey and its supplements on families and child care, and from special social surveys on time use and on aspects of the community such as volunteering and social capital. A further dimension is the provision of statistics for various population sub-groups including women and men, couple and one parent families, and carers.

Family and community statistics focus on outcomes and status within the population, including the demand for, and use of, services and monitor changes over time. They are used to support policy development, program delivery and program evaluation of key government agencies involved in social security, taxation, community, and family services. They provide information on needs for, and impacts of, programs and service provision, and can be used to assess areas of unmet need.

The main clients of the program are Australian government agencies (including the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Treasury, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Centrelink, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and the Australian Institute of Family Studies), state government agencies, academic and research institutions, and social welfare organisations.

Outputs

Outputs of the program include a range of products from the census and social surveys in the areas of family, child care, time use, community engagement and voluntary work. The product suite includes publications, spreadsheets, data cubes, special tabulations on request, and confidentialised unit record files with varying detail released on CD-ROM, through the ABS Remote Access Data Laboratory or for analysis on-site.

The publication *General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia* (cat. no. 4159.0) provides a profile of the socioeconomic characteristics of Australia's adult population and presents data on a range of social dimensions of the Australian community, including aspects of social attachment and multiple advantage and disadvantage.

The publication *Information Paper: Measuring Social Capital - An Australian Framework and Indicators* (cat. no. 1378.0) provides information on the ABS framework of social capital, a discussion of elements of social capital and possible indicators. Information on other population groups and areas of social concern are available in periodic survey publications.

Information about how men and women spend their time is derived from time use surveys and is published in *How Australians Use Their Time* (cat. no. 4153.0); and about volunteering from voluntary work surveys, published in *Voluntary Work, Australia* (4441.0).

Information about families and their circumstances are available on a recurrent basis from many sources including the Census of Population and Housing, the labour Force survey, and specialised surveys such as the Family Characteristics and Child Care surveys. Specialised survey publications include *Family Characteristics, Australia* (cat. no. 4442.0) and *Child Care, Australia* (cat. no. 4402.0).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- compile and publish 'Measures of Community Connection', an electronic product accessible from the ABS web site, drawing together data related to social capital from a range of ABS sources — due November 2005
- develop and conduct a new Monthly Population Survey supplementary survey topic on Pregnancy and Work Transitions — enumeration due November 2005
- conduct, and disseminate results from, the June 2005 Child Care Survey — due March 2006
- develop and conduct the second cycle (2006) of the General Social Survey with the inclusion of new components relating to social capital and voluntary work — enumeration due July 2006
- examine administrative and other data sources for their potential to contribute to measuring social capital in small areas — due October 2006
- develop and conduct the 2006 Time Use Survey — enumeration due November 2006
- develop and conduct, for the 2006–07 Multipurpose Household Survey, both a new family transitions and history module and the family characteristics core module — enumeration due June 2007
- undertake an analysis of the relationship of social capital items available from the 2006 General Social Survey with hypothesised outcomes — due November 2007
- in consultation with key stakeholders, prepare and implement an information development plan for family related statistics — due June 2008.

Culture and Recreation Statistics

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Regional Director
South Australian Office

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	0.8
04/05	0.9
05/06	0.9
06/07	0.9
07/08	0.9

Staff usage 2003/04

10 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Culture
and Recreation

Objectives

The Culture and Recreation Statistics program covers the activities of the ABS National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics (NCCRS). The NCCRS has responsibility for the leadership and coordination of national statistical activity in the fields of culture, sport and leisure, and migrants. Its activities include understanding current and emerging policy issues and debates and determining what statistics might be appropriate to inform decision making. It also provides expertise within the ABS regarding the collection of relevant data, as well as informing governments and the community about culture, sport and leisure, migrant statistics, relevant classifications and standards, and appropriate data analysis.

The main clients of the NCCRS are the Cultural Ministers' Council and the Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council, Australian government agencies (including the sport and culture areas of the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, the Australia Council, and the Australian Sports Commission), state and territory government departments (in both the culture and sport sectors), and some specific industry bodies. The outputs produced by the NCCRS are used by clients in various decision making forums, including the formulation and evaluation of strategic plans, policies and programs.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- statistical activities aimed at developing and promoting national standards — such as frameworks, classifications and definitions — for culture and recreation statistics (for example, the *Australian Culture and Leisure Classifications* (cat. no. 4902.0))
- leading the development, coordination and specification of statistical data needs through the preparation of Information Development Plans (IDPs); ongoing liaison with data users regarding their needs; reviewing strategic directions; and advice on client research projects
- a statistical information and dissemination service for culture, sport and leisure data, including the provision of publications and reports using data from ABS collections; maintenance of relevant data directories with information relating to ABS and non-ABS data; a culture and recreation theme page on the ABS web site; and production of a regular newsletter
- a statistical service responsible for developing data collections, analysing data and releasing data on: government funding for cultural activities; participation in cultural and leisure activities by adults and children; attendance at culture and sport venues; and paid and unpaid work in the culture and sport sectors
- a compendium of publications on culture and on sport and recreation which provide statistical summaries of all available data
- the provision of advice to clients, including inter-agency statistical working groups involved in the culture and sport sectors.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- progress the development of an IDP for cultural heritage and arts — due end 2005
- determine directions relating to migrant statistics, including visa category data — due end 2005
- assist with the validation and analysis of ABS surveys of the sports industries, libraries and museums — due early 2006
- review the Australian Culture and Leisure Classifications, taking into account changes to standard industry and occupation classifications — commence 2006
- undertake analytical projects relating to sport participation, sport attendance and culture attendance, with particular emphasis on exploring the barriers and motivators of participation, and social impacts — due 2007
- continue to analyse culture and sport data from various ABS household surveys, including: the General Social Survey; Children's Participation in Culture and Leisure Activities; and Work in Selected Culture and Leisure activities — ongoing
- increase standardisation of culture and sport statistical sources by ensuring the Australian Culture and Leisure Classifications are widely used, both within the ABS and externally — ongoing
- expand the coordination activities of the NCCRS by gaining information on culture and recreation data from sources beyond the ABS, and disseminating this information through the theme page on the ABS web site, and other appropriate avenues — ongoing.

Rural and Regional Statistics

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Regional Director
South Australian Office

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.1
04/05	1.1
05/06	1.2
06/07	1.2
07/08	1.2

Staff usage 2003/04

15 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Regional

Objectives

The Rural and Regional Statistics program consists of the Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre and the Regional Statistics Units (RSUs) situated in each ABS regional office. The aim of these areas is to improve access to, and dissemination of, both ABS and non-ABS regional statistics and to develop new regional measures where feasible. A particular focus of this work is on utilising administrative data maintained by state/territory and Australian government agencies where these data have location identifiers which have the potential to be exploited geographically.

The Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre is nationally focused. Its role is to provide leadership, and coordinate, produce and disseminate statistics that will assist policy analysts and researchers understand the causes of change across rural, regional and remote areas of Australia; meet the regional policy priority needs of Australian government agencies; and meet the needs of other researchers and policy analysts interested in comparative assessment between regions in different states and territories.

The RSUs work in collaboration with their relevant state/territory Statistical Services in responding to high priority state and territory needs for small area data by identifying potential datasets within agencies, working with agencies to improve their data quality and, by agreement, releasing these data to the public domain. RSUs also work collaboratively on specific projects with agencies or groups of agencies on developing indicators suited to their requirements. Regional development authorities and local government bodies are also clients of the RSUs.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- a National Regional Profile (NRP) — a web-based data suite of headline and more detailed statistics for every Australian local government area. The NRP contains data spanning five years and is updated annually
- a Rural and Regional Statistics Information Development Plan
- standard and customised regional profiles
- Perspectives on Regional Australia — occasional papers on the application of varying geographical analyses to specific subjects or themes
- experimental estimates and indicators from administrative data, such as the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) personal and business income tax data, and Family and Community Services (FaCS) data on income support
- public dissemination of quality-improved, administrative data through strong collaborative relationships with Australian, state and territory governments.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- release enhancements to the National Regional Profile – a web-based dataset for rural and regional statistics:
 - Module 2, containing time series information — due 2005
 - Module 3, containing state/territory specific information — due 2006–07
- undertake further work on the ATO and FaCS data-derived estimates on regional personal and small business income and income support customers — ongoing
- increase the quality assessment of non-ABS datasets and improve their public accessibility through loading metadata on non-ABS collections on the ABS web site — ongoing
- continue the development and provision of indicators in support of major state/territory government initiatives such as 'Tasmania Together' and 'Growing Victoria Together' — ongoing
- account manage the local government sector with regard to their small area information needs — ongoing.

Ageing Statistics

Program Manager

Malcolm Greig
Acting Regional Director
Queensland Office

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	0.6
04/05	0.5
05/06	0.4
06/07	0.4
07/08	0.4

Staff usage 2003/04

6 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Ageing

Objectives

The Ageing Statistics program covers the activities of the ABS National Ageing Statistics Unit (NASU). The NASU has responsibility for the leadership and coordination of national statistical activity in the field of ageing. Its activities include understanding current and emerging policy issues and debates and determining what statistics might be appropriate to inform decision making. It also provides expertise within and outside the ABS regarding the collection of relevant data, as well as informing governments and the community about ageing statistics, relevant classifications and standards, and appropriate data analysis.

NASU works closely with relevant government departments including the Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Treasury, state/territory departments responsible for issues relating to older persons, and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to provide well-coordinated statistical support on ageing policy development and evaluation in these areas.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- statistical leadership in the ageing field — setting and promoting standard ageing related definitions and concepts within an ageing statistical framework. This work will be supported through the development of ageing related standards and a directory, located on the ABS web site, which provides details of the ABS collections containing ageing related data
- leading the development, coordination and specification of statistical data needs through the preparation of an Information Development Plan (IDP)
- ensuring ageing issues are taken into account in determining data content and sample design for age-relevant surveys; and ensuring that an ageing dimension is included in the analyses of survey data wherever appropriate
- statistical research and analysis on a range of ageing topics, including compendium products on ageing in Australia and mature age people
- statistical support for policy initiatives related to ageing
- collaborative relationships with relevant policy agencies in federal and state governments, relevant national forums, and other influential organisations
- keeping abreast of emerging issues in relation to ageing, and actively facilitating statistical responses where appropriate
- providing subject matter expertise to other areas of the ABS conducting analyses of ageing related data.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- progress the development of the IDP for ageing — due end 2005
- undertake analytical projects related to ageing, such as housing and gender issues — due 2006
- continue to analyse ageing data from various ABS household surveys, including barriers and incentives, retirement intentions and work force participation — due 2006
- guide and assist advances in measurement of ageing issues, that is, from collection design through to description of results and specifying of analytical projects — ongoing
- develop and maintain a working knowledge of statistical information sources, both ABS and non-ABS — ongoing
- coordinate a focus on ageing issues across the ABS; collaborate analytical work with other ABS business units — ongoing
- increase standardisation of ageing terminology within the ABS and externally — ongoing.

Children and Youth Statistics

Program Manager

Alan Hubbard
Regional Director
Western Australian Office

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	0.3
04/05	0.3
05/06	0.2
06/07	0.2
07/08	0.2

Staff usage 2003/04

3 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Children
and Youth

Objectives

The Children and Youth Statistics program covers the activities of the ABS National Children and Youth Statistics Unit (NCYSU). The NCYSU provides statistical leadership and coordination across the field of children and youth statistics with the aim of guiding and influencing statistical activity, both ABS and non-ABS, in this field. The Unit also periodically undertakes analysis and reporting relevant to key children and youth issues.

The NCYSU maintains a dialogue with key stakeholders regarding emerging issues and related data gaps and needs. This activity is currently being progressed through the production of an information development plan for children and youth. The Unit keeps aware of emerging issues in relation to children and youth, actively facilitating responses where appropriate and ensuring consideration of children and youth data needs in respect of standards, survey content and design.

The main clients of the NCYSU are major Commonwealth and state government departments and agencies, several of which are represented on the Unit's advisory group. The outcomes of the NCYSU activity assist clients to better understand and utilise the available statistics on children and youth to improve their decision making with respect to policy formulation and program development and implementation.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- leading the development and coordination of children and youth statistics through production of an information development plan for children and youth
- to improve and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders across both government and non-government sectors
- statistical activities aimed at developing and promoting national standards with regard to children and youth statistics (such as classifications, frameworks and associated children and youth concepts)
- statistical analysis disseminated through ABS products
- the provision of advice to clients, including work associated with various children and youth working groups, committees and collaboration across government groups.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- gain commitment from key stakeholders to a comprehensive plan of action to improve statistics in the field and collaborate with those agencies and other areas of the ABS in undertaking this work. The first step will be a draft children and youth information development plan — due September 2005
- foster the use of standards and sound methodology across statistical collections to improve comparability across a range of children and youth statistics — ongoing
- build extensive collaborative working arrangements with stakeholders in the children and youth field — ongoing
- provide leadership to those developing statistical collections – assistance provided to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in preparation of 'A Picture of Australia's Children' will conclude in May 2005, with several other children and youth leadership initiatives continuing — ongoing.

Social Analysis and Reporting

Program Manager

Barbara Dunlop
First Assistant Statistician
Social and Labour
Statistics Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.8
04/05	1.6
05/06	1.3
06/07	1.3
07/08	1.3

Staff usage 2003/04

21 staff years

Objectives

The Social Analysis and Reporting program informs the government and the community of social conditions and progress in Australia. It draws together data and analysis both from within the ABS and from a range of other sources, and produces reports covering a wide range of issues. These reports contain up to date statistics and incorporate commentary about, and explanation of, the statistics. The reports include analysis of current circumstances, how circumstances have changed over time, how different groups of people have been affected, and how various factors may have accounted for observed trends.

The reports provide information on the wellbeing of the population, the extent of need and disadvantage in society, the progress that is being made towards social goals and targets, the interrelationships between economic, social and environmental aspects of life, and whether life in Australia is getting better.

The program is also responsible for providing leadership and coordination relating to the conceptual organisation of social statistics including the overall social statistics framework and related conceptual models. The framework's two primary dimensions — areas of social concern; and population groups — are central to ABS social statistics collection and reporting activity.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are reports which take a cross-cutting approach and bring together information on the situation of Australians across a range of areas of concern and for a variety of population groups of interest. The key publications are:

- *Australian Social Trends* (cat. no. 4102.0) — an annual flagship publication containing social statistics which describe contemporary issues for a range of areas of social concern (such as health, work, and family and community) at the national level
- *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0), an annual publication, and, *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001), a biennial publication, present a national summary of many of the key areas of economic, social and environmental progress, and discuss how they are linked with one another
- *Census of Population and Housing: Australia in Profile - A Regional Analysis* (cat. no. 2032.0) — a five-yearly publication containing census data, presented and analysed at a regional level.

Seminars based on *Australian Social Trends* and *Measures of Australia's Progress* are conducted for external clients nationally.

The publication *Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics* (cat. no. 4160.0) describes the conceptual frameworks underpinning ABS work in social statistics within each area of social concern.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- continue the annual publication *Australian Social Trends*, ensuring that the articles and social indicators reflect current and emerging social concerns — ongoing
- publish *Measures of Australia's Progress*, biennially (next release will be in 2006) and *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators*, annually (as an electronic product on the ABS web site) — ongoing
- present seminars on *Australian Social Trends* and *Measures of Australia's Progress* biennially — ongoing.

Population Statistics Standards

Program Manager

Ian Brodie-Reed
Assistant Statistician
Population Statistics
Infrastructure Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.4
04/05	1.3
05/06	1.2
06/07	1.0
07/08	0.9

Staff usage 2003/04

16 staff years

Objectives

The Population Statistics Standards program promotes the comparability, integration and quality of population statistics from the full range of ABS and external sources, through the use of standard concepts, definitions, classifications and procedures. This is an important part of the ABS strategy to expand and improve the national statistical service.

The project seeks to achieve this by:

- developing, maintaining and reviewing statistical standards for the core concepts (including statistical units), variables and classifications which are collected across the range of population statistics subject matter
- supporting the use of endorsed statistical standards in the ABS and external data collection activities
- providing national leadership and expertise with respect to statistical standards, classifications and definitions in social, labour and demographic statistics, and providing input to the development of international classifications and standards.

The program gives priority to those standard variables and classifications which provide the basis for comparability of data across subject matter fields. In general this means items which are included as explanatory variables or are used for the identification of population groups in a range of statistical collections dealing with different subject areas. For example, Labour Force Status is used in a wide range of collections to identify the unemployed.

The main clients of the program are the various statistical programs and the Dissemination program of the ABS, Commonwealth and state government departments as users and producers of statistical and administrative data, and a wide range of public and private sector agencies engaged in human service provision and socioeconomic research and analysis.

Outputs

The program produces standards for the variables and concepts which are collected across the range of social, labour and demographic subject matter such as labour force, family and household, income, cultural and language diversity. These standards include comprehensive documentation on definitions of concepts, questions, classifications, output categories, coding procedures and derivations. Guidelines and training are provided for their use in a range of statistical and administrative settings.

A particularly important component of the work is the development and maintenance of major standard classifications including the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations; and Australian Standard Classifications of Offences, Countries, Education, Drugs of Concern, Languages, Religious Groups, and Cultural and Ethnic Groups.

These standards and classifications are disseminated in a variety of ABS publications and on the ABS web site. The program provides support, technical assistance, and a range of products to support the implementation of the standards (such as coding indexes and systems) to a wide range of data producers both inside and outside the ABS.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop a suite of statistical standards for disability and the need for assistance — due mid 2006
- develop a new Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) — due mid 2006
- assess the quality of coding for the 2001 Census and subsequent tests, and produce enhanced indexes to increase match rates and quality for automatic coding in census and household surveys — due mid 2006
- contribute to the redevelopment of the International Standard Classification of Occupations — due 2007
- plan and coordinate the implementation of the new ANZSCO in ABS statistics and external data collection activities — progressively to 2008–09
- develop a comprehensive suite of standards for statistics on household and family income to replace the existing standards for cash income statistics — due 2007
- contribute to the development of integrated systems for the management of metadata in household surveys — due 2008.

METHODOLOGY DIVISION

Statistical Coordination

Program Manager

Geoff Lee
First Assistant Statistician
Methodology Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.2
04/05	0.5
05/06	0.7
06/07	0.7
07/08	0.7

Staff usage 2003/04

15 staff years

References

Statistical Clearing House:
www.sch.gov.au

National Statistical Service:
www.nss.gov.au

National Data Network:
www.ndn.gov.au

Objectives

The Statistical Coordination program is aimed at extending and strengthening the National Statistical Service. The program operates the Australian Government Statistical Clearing House which seeks to reduce the load on businesses and to ensure that the quality of those business surveys which are run is sufficient to provide the information needed. Within the ABS the program coordinates those key National Statistical Service activities which cut across multiple areas of the ABS; and outside the ABS in the Australian government sphere it supports an interagency committee for coordinating efforts to improve the National Statistical Service. It will also support people producing statistical services by disseminating best practice procedures and tools for both administrative collections and sample surveys.

The clients of the Statistical Coordination program are producers and users of statistical information within official bodies. The outputs from this program guide producers through the processes of designing and delivering high quality statistics.

Outputs

The Statistical Coordination program has four primary outputs. They are:

- operating the Australian Government Statistical Clearing House which provides a detailed assessment of each survey submitted for clearance, and a registered approval number for approved surveys. It also offers suggestions for improvements to survey design
- providing statistical skills development for official bodies, including statistical training. Statistical training offered by the program is offered to both the users of statistics, in order to improve data based decision making; and the producers of statistics, to ensure that data produced are fit for purpose
- coordinating and supporting activities across the Australian government which are progressing the National Statistical Service. The program provides secretariat support to the Commonwealth Statistical Forum, supports statistical networks, and manages the development of the National Data Network
- providing a consultancy service to other Australian government, state government and local government departments and authorities, and research and teaching institutions on a user pays basis. Areas of assistance include survey design, statistical methods, and data analysis.

The program also produces and maintains a web site which contains best practice reference materials for data storage and survey design. The web site is a source of general advice to Australian government departments and agencies on the design and conduct of business surveys, and the production of statistics from administrative systems.

The program maintains and publishes the Australian Government Business Surveys Register. The Register contains design details and contact information for all surveys that have been submitted to the Statistical Clearing House. The Register is accessible through the Internet.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- support the formation and operation of the Australian Government Statistical Forum — ongoing
- increase the range of options available to Australian government agencies for developing and skilling personnel in statistical positions — ongoing
- enhance the web site to provide supporting information for survey managers on good practice in survey design, development and implementation (a particular focus in the immediate future will be the development of the National Data Network) — ongoing
- expand the metadata publicly available about collections to ensure it is providing effective information to users, and to improve links to publicly available datasets — ongoing.

Analytical Services

Program Manager

Marion McEwin
Assistant Statistician
Analytical Services
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	2.9
04/05	3.0
05/06	3.2
06/07	3.2
07/08	3.2

Staff usage 2003/04

33 staff years

Objectives

The Analytical Services program:

- develops new statistical products through the confrontation, analysis and synthesis of ABS and non-ABS data
- develops ways of measuring socioeconomic concepts that are not easily measured by direct data collection
- develops and applies methods for detecting relationships between economic and social variables
- provides advice and training regarding quality improvements to ABS and non-ABS data, analytical methods and products
- collaborates with research institutes on projects and research of mutual interest.

The statistical products generated are an important input to policy formation, decision making and research in government and the private sector. Government users include Commonwealth economic and social policy agencies (especially the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Australian Taxation Office, the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Health and Ageing, and the Productivity Commission), state Treasuries, and other government agencies.

Outputs

The program develops analytical products including new time series, databases and models which measure socioeconomic concepts and relationships. These products help policy makers, business planners and other social and economic analysts understand key socioeconomic phenomena.

The program publishes several regular products. *The Modellers' Database* (cat. no. 1364.0.15.003) is used by economists to understand and forecast short and medium term developments in the Australian macro-economy. It was developed by the Treasury and is maintained jointly by the Treasury and the ABS. The *Treasury Model of the Australian Economy - TSP Version* (cat. no. 1364.0.15.001) permits users to run forecasts and to simulate the effects of policy settings. Both the model and the database are released quarterly. *Australian Economic Indicators* (cat. no. 1350.0) is a monthly compendium used by economic analysts in the private, government and academic sectors, and by the media. The compendium is a convenient and comprehensive source of economic time series, including historical data. It also contains a quarterly review of economic indicators and articles on the analysis and interpretation of socioeconomic data.

In addition to these regular products, the program produces a series of *Research Papers* (cat. no. 1351.0) (formerly Working Papers in Econometrics and Applied Statistics) which present the results of current research or analysis often of an experimental nature to encourage discussion and comment.

The resources identified for this project also include a substantial contribution to the ABS economic and social statistics work program in supporting the development and evaluation of methods and conduct of value-added analysis.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop methods for estimating socioeconomic variables for smaller areas and sub-populations than can be supported by sample surveys — due September 2005
- review the content and means of disseminating the monthly Australian Economic Indicators flagship publication — due September 2005
- develop expertise in using melded ABS and non-ABS datasets — due June 2006
- develop expertise in data linking — due December 2006
- collaborate with universities through partnering in Australian Research Council linkage grants in the area of time use analysis, price index compilation, and innovation — due December 2007
- produce the socioeconomic indexes for areas based on the 2006 Population Census addressing evolving user needs and uses of these indexes — due March 2008.

CENSUS AND GEOGRAPHY

Census of Population and Housing

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Census and
Geography Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	8.1
04/05	14.1
05/06	49.6
06/07	121.9
07/08	16.8

Staff usage 2003/04

86 staff years

References

At www.abs.gov.au, select Census on the horizontal navigation bar

Objectives

The Census program conducts a five-yearly census of population and housing. Its aim is to accurately and efficiently measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on census night so as to provide a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each state and territory and to provide timely, high quality and relevant five-yearly benchmark data within areas of social concern (for example, housing, education, labour force) for small geographic areas and for small population groups.

Census data are used extensively by all levels of government for planning, administration, and policy development and monitoring. Population estimates based on the Census are used to determine the number of seats allocated to each state and territory in the House of Representatives and for the allocation of Australian government grants to state, territory and local governments.

Community groups use census data to plan for their communities and in applications for government assistance. Businesses use census data for business location purposes and understanding their markets.

Outputs

The results of the census are available in a variety of formats including printed publications, CD-ROM and via the Internet.

Profiles

Community Profiles: a set of tables containing key census characteristics of people, families and dwellings covering most topics on the 2001 census form. The Basic Community Profile contains 33 tables and is available for all geographic levels from collection district to Australia as a whole. Other profiles in the series include the Expanded Community Profile, Working Population, Time Series, Usual Residence and Indigenous Profiles.

Community Profiles are available electronically and in hard copy. All community profiles are accessible in major libraries through the CLIB product. The 2001 Census Basic Community Profiles for every Statistical Local Area in Australia are available, free of charge, from the ABS web site.

Printed publications

The 2001 Census Dictionary provides information about the classifications and concepts used in the 2001 Census. There are three series of publications containing selected census data for statistical local areas and urban centres and localities. Social atlases which map key census characteristics are available for each capital city.

Geographic products

Two series of hard copy maps are available to assist in interpreting census data. Boundary data are available in digital formats.

CDATA

A CD-ROM product which contains census, statistical boundary and map data with data manipulation and desktop mapping and analysis software.

Customised Data Services

Where users' specialised information needs cannot be met by standard publications or products, customised data services are available through ABS Information Consultancy.

Internet

A wide range of reference and product information, and selected census data, are available from the ABS web site at <http://www.abs.gov.au/census>.

2006 Census

The ABS has released proposed plans for 2006 Census output in *Information Paper: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, ABS Views on Census Output Strategy* (cat. no. 2009.0). This publication is available free of charge from the ABS web site.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- establish regional office census management units — due July 2005
- establish a Census Data Processing Centre — due July 2005
- complete production of material for census collection (such as forms, record books, manuals) — due February 2006
- commence recruitment processes for census field staff — due February 2006
- undertake and evaluate a dress rehearsal of census collection, processing and output procedures and processes — due March 2006
- undertake user consultation on data content of standard census output — due March 2006
- complete census processing and output systems — due June 2006
- conduct Census on Census night — Tuesday 8 August 2006
- complete census processing — due August 2007
- develop strategic directions for 2011 Census — due December 2007.

Geography

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Census and
Geography Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	1.9
04/05	2.7
05/06	1.3
06/07	1.2
07/08	1.2

Staff usage 2003/04

20 staff years

Objectives

The Geography program has the following objectives:

- to set, maintain and promote geographic, mapping and Geographic Information System (GIS) standards for the ABS
- to provide geographic, mapping and GIS support services for the Census of Population and Housing
- to improve ABS flexibility in spatial statistics by implementing appropriate GIS and geocoding technology for the collection, production and dissemination of such statistics
- to develop efficient and user-friendly products for the integration and dissemination of ABS and selected non-ABS spatial statistics.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) in the form of electronic structures (cat. no. 1216.0.15.001), the classification manual in hardcopy and electronic formats (cat. no. 1216.0), and digital map boundaries
- the *National Localities Index, Australia* (cat. no. 1252.0.55.001) for electronic coding of address information to the ASGC
- concordances for relating statistics to different geographical units
- the ABS Master Spatial Database
- Collection Districts design and mapping to support the execution of the Census
- geographical products to support Census outputs such as reference maps and topographic databases
- to support the mapping, address coding, GIS, geographical classification and spatial data management needs of the ABS.

The Australian Standard Geographical Classification is used by all statistical programs which publish data below state and territory level. Many public and private sector organisations use the ASGC to make their own statistics comparable with ABS data and with other sources of spatially referenced statistics. Most ABS statistical programs, and a number of external clients, use the National Localities Index to code their data to the ASGC. Advice is provided to subject matter areas and external clients on ASGC standards and concepts and associated geographical issues. Digital boundaries of ASGC areas are used by many organisations, both public and private, for analysis and presentation of statistics in GIS. The use of these digital boundaries is well established amongst GIS users and they are a fundamental dataset of the Australian Spatial Data Infrastructure.

The ABS is working with other organisations to develop a Geocoded National Address File, and associated with this, mesh blocks as the basic unit of geography within the ASGC and a coding engine. These developments will allow the ABS and other organisations to efficiently and accurately code their data to mesh blocks and thus promote the integration and dissemination of a wide range of data on common geographic boundaries.

The Master Spatial Database and associated mapping systems are used by the Census program and the Population Surveys program to support the ongoing production of maps and geographic data for enumeration purposes, and the development of post-census output products.

Maps appearing in ABS publications are prepared to standards developed by the Geography program which also provides utilities for map production and assistance to ABS staff for particularly difficult or complex maps. The program also provides advice and assistance to any ABS subject matter area which has an opportunity to improve the efficiency of production or quality of statistics through the use of GIS and associated technologies.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- manage the Collection District design for the 2006 Census — due December 2005
- develop a Geocoded National Address File and mesh block level coding infrastructure, in partnership with other organisations — due December 2005
- develop and implement meshblocks as the basic unit in the ASGC for output of data from the 2006 Census and other ABS collections — due August 2006
- promote the use of a Geocoded National Address File and mesh block level coding to other agencies — ongoing from 2006
- provide geographic and GIS support services for ABS collections, in particular for the processing and output of the 2006 Census — ongoing
- investigate potential applications of geocoding in the ABS — ongoing
- produce annual editions of the ASGC (September 2005 and 2006) and updates to the National Locality Index — ongoing.

STATE PROGRAM

State and Territory Statistical Services

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

03/04	6.2
04/05	7.6
05/06	8.3
06/07	8.4
07/08	8.3

Staff usage 2003/04

88 staff years

Objectives

The State and Territory Statistical Services (STSS) program provides a flexible and responsive service to meet the priority statistical needs of state and territory governments and other important state and territory based clients, in addition to those met by the ongoing statistical outputs of the ABS. The STSS project supports the ABS objective of an expanded and improved National Statistical Service within each state and territory.

The outcomes expected of the STSS project are:

- strong, collaborative relationships with state and territory governments
- a timely, relevant, and responsive ad hoc statistical service that meets high priority state and territory needs beyond those which can be satisfied by the ABS national programs
- as a component of the National Statistical Service, increased availability of good quality state and territory and regional data from ABS and non-ABS sources that meets high priority state and territory statistical needs, as far as possible within national standards and frameworks
- as a component of the National Statistical Service, informed and increased use of state and territory and regional data from ABS and non-ABS sources
- enhanced ABS decisions from the input of state and territory views to ABS program reviews, research, and other specific work program activities.

Outputs

The main outputs of the STSS project are:

- state and territory government statistical policy/coordination committees which facilitate collaborative strategies for improved statistical coordination with each jurisdiction
- annual statistical priorities papers for each state and territory as an input to the ABS forward work program development
- an annual household survey, or alternative statistical project, for each state and territory government. The survey topic or project varies each year and between jurisdictions, and is chosen in consultation with the relevant state and territory governments
- statistical projects designed to meet high priority unmet needs of state and territory governments
- in collaboration with state and territory governments, projects undertaken to improve the quality, coherence, comparability, and availability of state and territory government agencies' administrative data
- statistical consultancy services covering a wide range of services including survey design, statistical analysis, methodological advice and assistance, and a range of statistical training and development activities
- dissemination of ABS and other statistics to satisfy state and territory needs beyond those met by ABS national programs
- advice and intelligence to ABS national programs on relevant state and territory statistical needs and issues.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- enhance ABS contacts and networks with state and territory government agencies and optimise feedback of relevant statistical information to and from the ABS — ongoing
- identify and evaluate the demand for, and supply of, statistical data, and in collaboration with ABS programs and state and territory governments, develop strategies to fill high priority demand gaps — ongoing
- improve the range and quality of regional data, and the quality of Indigenous identification in key non-ABS administrative datasets — ongoing
- provide assistance to state and territory governments, including statistical training and advice on implementing data management best practice guidelines, to improve the quality, coherence, comparability, and availability of statistics from key state and territory administrative datasets — ongoing
- develop and undertake ad hoc statistical projects, including strategic outposts, for state and territory governments — ongoing
- undertake the development and processing of state and territory household surveys, or alternative statistical projects, and general outputs — surveys conducted in October each year.

