

ABS Environmental Statistics Newsletter

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About the Environment and Energy Statistics Section

The Environment and Energy Statistics Section (EESS) of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is a multi-disciplinary team involved in the research and analysis of environmental and energy issues based on ABS and non-ABS data.

Since its inception in June 1991, EESS's scope has progressively expanded and advances made in exciting new areas of environment statistics. Notable achievements include:

- The publication of the popular time series on household data which covers people's concerns, attitudes and behaviour on water, energy, transport and waste.
- Work accomplished in the area of environment protection expenditure (EPE) and environmental resource accounting.
- The publications of a number of well received compendiums presenting current environmental data.
- Advice to statistical agencies in other countries (e.g. Malaysia, the Philippines) on the establishment of various environmental statistics collections, including EPE, Household surveys and Environmental Accounts.
- Participation on national and international committees.

Staff at EESS have experience at researching and collating data from various sources for publication. Various products and services, such as consultancy and user funded data gathering, are on offer to meet the needs of stakeholders and other interested parties. Work can be customised to suit specific requirements.

About this newsletter

The ABS Environment Statistics Newsletter is produced on a half yearly basis. It features news and developments in relation to work done by EESS. If you would like to be placed on our mailing list, please contact Boon Lim and leave your address details and the number of copies required.

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Environment and Energy Statistics Section Webpages

EESS has a collection of environment statistics on the ABS environment statistics website. The information is extracted from various ABS publications and is presented in the form of tables, maps, graphs and dot key points where appropriate. There are also links to other related websites. A range of topics are covered and these are listed on the website in batches and rotated periodically as statistical data are updated.

Students, teachers and other interested readers are welcome to use the statistics and can refer back to the original ABS publications for further information and/or clarification if desired.

Comments, queries and/or feedback can be forwarded to Boon Lim at the following email address: boon.lim@abs.gov.au

Australia's Environment

In December this year the first edition of *Australia's Environment*, ABS Catalogue No. 4613.0, is due for release. The publication will be produced annually and will present a broad selection of environmental statistics and information which illustrates topical environmental issues that affect the future of Australia as a nation. Each year the subject matter covered will vary slightly, as new environmental issues emerge or more current data sources become available. Data and information are derived from ABS collections and surveys and also from a wide range of non-ABS organisations and agencies.

The first edition explores some of the relationships that exist between our use of the natural environment in Australia for socio-economic benefit and the impacts that some of these activities have on our ecology and stocks of natural resources. Some of the environmental themes which will be covered include land use; energy use; marine and freshwater systems; population projections and density; climate change; and waste and pollution. Case studies will also be presented throughout the publication to provide examples that highlight key environmental issues. All statistical information and supporting text will be presented with the non-specialist audience in mind, as the publication aims to meet the information needs of a wide audience.

Expected release date is December 2000.

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Energy Account

Energy Accounts, Australia: 1992-93 - 1996-97 ABS Cat. No. 4604.0, is due for release mid-2000. This is the second Energy Account to be released by EESS, describing the stock of primary energy resources in Australia, and the flow of these resources through the Australian economy. The publication will present tables on the supply and use of both primary and secondary energy products such as black and brown coal, crude oil, natural gas, electricity and petroleum products, as well as renewable energy resources such as solar, bagasse and hydroelectricity.

In addition, the supply of greenhouse gas emissions by industry for each of the financial years will be presented. More extensive analysis will present direct and total energy requirements derived from the integration of physical and monetary input-output tables, including indicators of energy and greenhouse gas intensities.

Expected release date is mid-2000.

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Water Account

EESS is currently developing an environmental accounting report on Australia's water resources. The publication, *Water Account for Australia 1993/94 to 1996/97*, ABS Cat. No. 4610.0, describes the physical flow in terms of supply and use of water from the environment through various economic sectors in Australia.

The information is based on water usage data collected from a range of organisations around Australia (local, state and commonwealth governments, water boards and industries). It will feature supply and use tables depicting the flow of water throughout the economy for each State. The format in which data has been presented is based on an international standard but has been refined to consider the nature and use of water resources in Australia.

This publication is part of a series of physical environmental accounts that are being developed and is focussed on the physical characteristics of Australia's water resources. Where available, quantitative data are compiled on a national and state level. Detailed statistics on the volume of surface and groundwater assets (for Victoria only), the supply and use of water by various industries and sectors, water reuse and discharge data are presented. Monetary data linked to the use of water resources are supplied. A compilation of water supply and use sustainability indicators are also presented.

Managers and planners involved in sustainable water use and water resource management may find this publication helpful in their policy formulation and decision making process. Economic and social decisions can have a better outcome when environmental issues are taken into consideration.

The publication is expected to be released by the end of April 2000.

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Household Surveys

Beginning in 1992, ABS household surveys have included an environmental component, which is published every two years as *Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices*, ABS Cat. No. 4602.0. From 1999 onwards it will be published annually. It contains household environmental statistics on a wide range of topics.

The topics surveyed include:

- household waste management
- environmentally friendly products and packaging
- recycling of household waste
- use of household fertiliser and pesticide
- environmental concerns and attitudes
- environmental involvement
- views on environmental protection and economic growth
- sources and influence of environmental information
- use of heritage areas and national and state parks
- energy conservation measures
- energy source and use
- household appliances
- water source and use
- motor vehicle ownership and maintenance and
- transport use.

They are divided into 3 main subject areas; namely Transport and Waste, Water and Energy. Not all topics are covered in any one publication as the survey topics are rotated from year to year. This year, the survey will be on Transport and Waste and the publication will be released by the end of the year. For 2001, the subject will be Water, and for 2002, it will be Energy. Transport and Waste will be surveyed again in 2003.

A core set of data covering householders' attitudes to the environment have been presented annually. Comments from interested users of this data are encouraged and can provide input into current methodological investigations.

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Environment Protection Expenditures in Australia

This publication presents estimates of expenditure on environment protection by Australian governments, the corporate sector and households. Information is collected about the agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and services industries, as well as utilities providing electricity, gas and water treatment services. Estimates are also presented for all levels of government - Commonwealth, State/Territory and Local.

The expenditures of governments, businesses and households are broken down into a number of categories of environmental protection. These include waste management (including hazardous and non-hazardous), waste water & water protection, air & climate, biodiversity & landscape, soil & groundwater, and other environmental protection. This breakdown is consistent with the Classification of Environment Protection Activities provided by the United Nations System for Integrated Environmental & Economic Accounting.

The ABS continues to collect and present comprehensive estimates of environmental protection expenditures for a number of reasons:

- they provide an indication of the response of various sectors to environment protection policies and regulation
- they provide some indication of the demands for environmental protection goods and services provided by the environment management industry, and
- they form part of environmental 'satellite' accounts designed to augment the system of national accounts

Information on environmental protection expenditures has been collected and published for the financial years 1990-91 to 1996-97. The ABS is currently preparing to collect this information for 1999-2000, which will be published in 2001.

Between March and June 2000, EESS will be undertaking a review of the *Environment Protection Expenditure, Australia* publication (4603.0). During the review, the ABS will seek the views of a wide range of users across government and industry sectors and across Australia on the usefulness, quality and comprehensiveness of the publication and the information presented within it.

The information that is obtained from the user consultation is important, as it will be used to help identify ways of improving the publication to better meet user needs in the future. Please refer to contact person if you are interested in participating in the user consultation, or you would like more information.

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Environmental Expenditures in Australian Local Government

The ABS collects information each year from local governments across Australia about their environment related expenditures and income. Environment related transactions are divided into two main groups: those related to protecting the environment, and those related to managing and using natural resources. These categories are consistent with an agreed international framework called the United Nations System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (1993).

Environment protection is defined as those activities whose primary purpose is to prevent, reduce, or eliminate wastes or other degradation of the environment, and to redress degradation after it occurs. These activities cover council responsibilities like management of waste water and waste (hazardous and non-hazardous) and protection of air and climate, biodiversity, soils and groundwater and cultural heritage.

Natural resource use and management covers all activities relating to the use and management of natural assets (that is non-produced assets like land, water, minerals and energy) for economic or social purposes. These activities cover council responsibilities such as management of water supplies, land planning, provision of parks and reserves, quarrying, etc.

This information was published in *Environment Expenditure Local Government (Experimental Estimates) Australia 1997-98*. The publication shows that in the financial year 1997-1998 local governments spent nearly \$3.5 billion on environment related activities. The majority of Environmental Protection Expenditure was spent in the areas of waste management (\$955 million) and waste water management (\$929 million). The majority of Natural Resource Management was spent on inland water services (\$672 million) and land planning and management (\$651 million).

The Environment and Natural Resources survey for 1998-99 is currently being conducted and includes approximately half of Australia's councils, from all States and a range of regions throughout Australia. The results will be released in June 2000.

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The London Group on Environmental Accounting

The London Group was formed in 1993 to provide a forum for interested national statistical officers to share their experience of developing and implementing Environmental Accounting. Beginning in 1994, yearly meetings have been held in different countries. Recently EESS hosted the sixth annual meeting at Canberra from 14 November to 19 November 1999. The meeting was attended by representatives from statistical offices and international organisations from different parts of the world.

At the moment, the London Group is revising the international guidelines presented in the UN's System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting handbook. The final publication will serve as a reference text for countries wishing to adopt Environmental Accounting.

Over the last decade there is a strong push towards Environmental Accounting, where environmental information is integrated into the accounting framework. Traditionally national accounts are compiled to take stock of past events in a systematic way, which is useful for analysis, forecasting, and decision and policy making. However, changes to the environment and their consequences are ignored in national accounts. Important issues, such as the consumption of natural resources by the economy, the impact of the economy on the environment and sustainable use of resources are neglected. Environmental Accounting provides a vital link between the economy and the environment and better reflects sustainability and development. It is produced as satellite accounts which are linked to the economic accounts of the System of National Accounts.

EESS has embarked on producing environmental accounts for a selection of Australia's natural resources. EESS is also involved in the streamlining of policies on Environmental Accounting at the international level and is a valued participant in the London Group on Environmental Accounting.

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First Subregional Training Workshop on Environment Statistics

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Statistics Division is planning to organise the above Workshop in Bangkok, tentatively from 8 to 19 May 2000. The ABS will be participating in this workshop and presenting some of the sessions.

The broad aim of the project is to improve national capabilities of developing countries in the region for identifying, collecting, processing, analysing and utilising the data needed for formulating policies and programmes for environment and sustainable development as well as for monitoring and evaluating the progress made.

The main objectives of the workshop are to:

- train middle and senior level officials from national statistical offices and environmental agencies in East and South-East Asia by exposing them to recent developments and methodological issues in the fields of environment statistics, indicators and accounting including definitions, classifications, survey and estimation methodologies, and data sources;
- review the progress made in the countries/areas of the region in the field of environment statistics and share their experiences of issues encountered and strategies adopted to overcome some of the obstacles faced;
- formulate a set of recommendations for improving the availability of environment statistics and indicators in the countries/areas invited.

Additional information about the Workshop will be available on the Statistics Division web site <http://www.unescap.org/stat/> in due course.

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National Energy End-use Database (NEED) Working Group

The Energy Management Taskforce (EMTF) of ANZMEC (Australian and New Zealand Minerals and Energy Council) established a Working Group in 1993. EMTF was established to help ANZMEC honour its commitment to the Council of Australian Governments (CoAG) to enhance the quality and scope of energy end-use data. The objective of this National Energy End-use Database (NEED) Working Group was defined as follows:

To develop a national energy end-use database incorporating both energy consumption data and determinant (technical, economic and social) data by sector and by region.

The NEED Working Group of the EMTF was formed to facilitate the development of a mechanism to improve the quality, depth, timeliness and accessibility of data from all sources. This process would, in turn, provide a mechanism to improve the analytical base for both government decision making and business assessment. An energy data directory (bibliographical database) is one option presented to the NEED Working Group to deal with the issue of identifying available data, its characteristics and the means of accessing this data.

ABS is a member of the committee and is currently working in cooperation with the Department of Industry, Science and Resources in the development of an electronic Directory of Energy data sources.

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