



Statistical UPDATE

An Information Newsletter from the Queensland Office

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Keeping Queensland Key Clients Up-to-Date: A Note from our Regional Director

Welcome to the first issue of ABS Queensland's "Statistical Update" Newsletter. This newsletter will be produced 3 to 4 times a year and will cover issues which affect our key Queensland clients.

Each newsletter will feature a series of articles which I hope are interesting to read. They will cover issues of interest and relevance to our key clients, including:

- developments in social and economic statistics, and the collections which generate them;
- changes and developments in classifications;
- forthcoming user reviews (and feedback on outcomes from earlier ones);
- recent releases of publications or data;
- new strategies for disseminating statistics;
- statistical training available through the ABS;
- forthcoming visitors from other ABS offices.

We invite your feedback and any comments or issues which you would like included in future editions.

Brian Doyle

Major Review of ABS Household Survey Program

As part of a major review of its household survey program, the ABS recently circulated a report containing proposals for future household surveys. The household survey program (i) provides a range of statistics required to monitor the social and economic well-being of Australians with particular reference to important sub-groups of the population; and (ii) supports the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs of key Commonwealth and State Government agencies.

The report proposals are based on a series of consultations with key users over the last 12 months and consideration of user submissions on the needs for and uses made of household survey data. The review is strategic as it aims to set the future structure and broad content of the ABS program of household surveys by reassessing existing and continuing demands against emerging new demand, including the known gaps in the household survey program. Assessed relative priorities are indicated by suggesting which topics should be included and with what frequency.

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Changes to the 2001 Census Collection Districts

Work has begun on the 2001 Census with the redesign of Collection Districts (CD's). There has been a shift in focus in design work away from the stringent CD design rules of the past. There will be more flexibility in CD sizes, which in some cases may reach 400–450 dwellings, compared to the previous limit of 350 dwellings.

As part of the consultation process, each Local Government Authority will be contacted approximately eight weeks before the commencement of design work on relevant mapping areas, and their input will be sought on boundary changes. Major State Government and Private Sector users will also be contacted as part of the process.

The target completion date for the redesign is November 2000.

For further information contact Keith Venton on 07 3222 6387 or keith.venton@abs.gov.au.

Latest Data on the Accommodation Industry

Results from a survey of the accommodation industry will be published in *Accommodation Industry, Australia, 1997–98* (Cat. no. 8695.0), expected to be released in August. The previous survey was conducted in the 1995–96 financial year.

The publication contains information on the income, expenses, profitability and employment of organisations involved in the accommodation industry in Australia. A range of data are presented by size, State and type of accommodation organisation. The publication will be in two parts; one part relating to management unit estimates and the other part relating to profitability of accommodation establishments of these management units with comparisons to the 1995–96 and 1991–92 estimates.

For further information contact Paul Hoffmann on 07 3222 6201 or paul.hoffmann@abs.gov.au.

A Regional View of Australian Taxation Office Data

The ABS Queensland (ABSQ) is evaluating Australian Taxation Office (ATO) business income tax data from a regional perspective and would like your input regarding data you would find useful.

The ABSQ Regional Statistics Unit has been working with the 1995–96 ATO business income tax information data for about a year and we have gained an appreciation of both the potential and the limitations of the data. Work has recently begun on the 1996–97 files. We feel now is the time to talk to our clients about what sorts of output from our analysis of ATO business income tax data they would find useful.

While the legislation under which the ABS operates (the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*) does not allow the ABS to provide the ATO with data reported by individual businesses, the Income Tax Assessment Act 1986 enables the ATO to provide the ABS with such data, for statistical purposes only.

We have access to the ATO tax information for companies, partnerships, trusts and individuals (reporting business or professional items only) for the 1995–96 and 1996–97 financial years.

Discussions will be arranged with interested people through the Statistical Liaison Officer network.

For further information contact Brian Holliday on 07 3222 6132 or brian.holliday@abs.gov.au.

Regional Commodity Exports Estimates Now Available to Clients

The ABS Queensland office has developed a methodology to estimate international commodity exports from regions.

At the 1997 National Trade Consultations Ministerial Meeting, the Queensland Government raised the problem of lack of export data at the regional level as an impediment to delivering well-targeted services to rural and regional exporters.

The Queensland Government's regional export statistics initiative coincided with work being undertaken by the Brisbane Office of the ABS to examine the broad issue of regional statistics. Accordingly, Queensland ABS undertook the project to develop a methodology for the Queensland Government to estimate the international commodity exports from regions.

The methodology developed was tested on the Mackay region, one of the four pilot regions selected by the Regional International Trade Branch of the Department of State Development, and commodity exports have been estimated for 1994–95, 1995–96 and 1996–97. In preparing the estimates there was close consultation with Department of State Development.

The methodology has been subsequently tested on two other (Department of State Development) regions, namely, Central Highlands and Bundaberg. Replicating the methodology with these two regions demonstrated its applicability across a variety of regions.

The ABS can produce commodity export estimates for other regions of Queensland as consultancies.

For further information contact Brian Holliday on 07 3222 6132 or brian.holliday@abs.gov.au.

New Opportunity To Analyse Business Dynamics and Performance

While there is an extensive range of information on particular industries and other aggregated groupings of businesses, little is really understood about the dynamics of individual businesses - how they adapt to changing economic circumstances, how they grow, contract or die, or how different business structures influence performance.

The Australian Business Longitudinal Survey (BLS) provides a unique database which examines a wide range of business characteristics and behaviours, and links these to performance over time. The BLS provides the analyst with information to examine the impact of issues such as exporting, innovation, business planning, different employment structures, different financial structures, training, business networks (just to mention a few) on business growth and performance. The analyst can choose or construct a range of different performance measures based on profit, sales, assets, equity or capital expenditure.

The database has four years data covering 1994-95 through to 1997-98; the sample of about 5,500 businesses covers most of the Australian private sector with State dissections also available.

The ABS is currently actively encouraging the use of this rich dataset of business information. As well as the range of published data that has been released, a subsidised tabulation service is available where clients can specify tables tailored to their own needs at a price of \$25 per table. Also on offer is a service to facilitate access to confidentialised unit record data. This service, known as remote access, allows the researcher to submit analytical procedures and programs to the ABS to be

run against the full database, while confidentiality is still protected. This process can be conducted via e-mail with results usually available within a day.

For researchers requiring more intensive interactive access there is a Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) available.

For further information contact Christine Price on 02 6252 5746, or chris.price@abs.gov.au.

Overtime Statistics

Since 1983, statistics on overtime have been produced by the ABS from a quarterly employer survey. These statistics have been released in *Job Vacancies and Overtime, Australia* (Cat. no. 6354.0).

As a result of a recent review, after May 1999 overtime data will no longer be collected as part of this survey. The August 1999 issue of the publication will be retitled *Job Vacancies, Australia* and will contain statistics on job vacancies only.

Information on some aspects of overtime and other related statistics can be obtained from:

- *Employee Earnings and Hours*—Contact David Oats on 08 9360 5313 or david.oats@abs.gov.au
- *Survey of Average Weekly Earnings*—Contact Glynis Franklin-Orell on 08 9360 5304 or glynis.franklin-orrell@abs.gov.au
- *Wage Cost Index*—Contact Carrington Shepherd on 08 9360 5170 or carrington.shepherd@abs.gov.au
- *Working Arrangements*—Contact Michael Giess on 02 6252 6503 or michael.giess@abs.gov.au

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROGRAM REVIEW *continued*

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The review paper discusses the range of social surveys possible under three broad options, based on funding levels allocated by ABS to the program.

The report, in conjunction with preliminary comments from users on the proposals in the report, will be discussed by the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC), on 14 July 1999. However, there is still an opportunity for additional comments to be provided to the ABS by the end of July at the latest, so they can be considered in finalising the review. While option 3 is clearly the most comprehensive and desirable, it is important for users to give serious consideration to options 1 and 2.

For enquiries or copies of the review paper contact Debra McDonald on 07 3222 6083 or debra.mcdonald@abs.gov.au.

EXTENDED HOURS

ABS Queensland Opening Hours Have Changed

Visitors to the ABS at 313 Adelaide Street may have noticed that our opening hours have changed. To enable better access for our customers and visitors, new opening hours are:

ABS Opening hours:

Monday to Friday 8.30 - 4.30

**Bookshop & Library Level 18,
313 Adelaide St, Brisbane**

**Telephone inquiry service
ph. 07 3222 6351**

The July 2 1999 release of 1996–97 environmental protection expenditure accounts is the first attempt by the ABS to present comprehensive environment protection expenditure in accordance with The European System for Economic Information on the Environment (SERIEE).

Since 1994, the scope for the collection of these statistics has broadened, with data collection and presentation influenced by changing international frameworks in this field.

SERIEE defines environment protection as ‘...all actions and activities that are aimed at the prevention, reduction and elimination of pollution as well as any other degradation of the environment’ (Eurostat 1994).

The ABS collects and presents comprehensive estimates of environment protection expenditure and income for a number of reasons:

- they are indicative of the response of various sectors to environment protection;
- they provide some indication of the demand for goods and services provided by the ‘environment management’ industry;
- they form part of the environment ‘satellite’ accounts designed to augment the core system of national accounts; and
- to estimate expenditure on environment protection, by sector and environmental domain.

Since it covers all environment protection expenditures, not just those relating to pollution abatement and control, SERIEE has a broader scope than the previous OECD PAC framework. It includes expenditures on activities such as protection of landscapes, biodiversity, soil and groundwater, in addition to the traditional environment protection activities such as waste management and air and water pollution abatement. Hence, it is better suited to the Australian experience where soil and landscape degradation are important environmental concerns.

The SERIEE framework, which underpins the environment protection account, allows for the presentation and analysis of three major questions:

- (i) how much a nation spends on environment protection and what form this expenditure takes;
- (ii) how and by which units the expenditure is financed;

- (iii) the value of the production of environment protection services.

The broader framework enables environment protection activities to be classified to the key areas:

- waste management
- waste water and water protection
- ambient air and climate protection
- protection of biodiversity and landscape
- protection of soil and groundwater; and
- other environment protection activities.

Interesting Information from the 1996–97 collection includes:

- Australian governments, industry and households spent an estimated \$8.6 billion on various measures to protect the environment. This represented 1.6% of GDP.
- Waste water management and waste management activities accounted for well over half of total expenditure for environment protection measures (\$5.5b).
- Protection of the environment by Australian households was estimated to be \$2.6b, comprising mostly waste water services (\$1.7b).
- General government expenditure was largely responsible for measures aimed at the protection of biodiversity and landscape. Activities include programs related to flora and fauna conservation, controls on land clearing and protection of world heritage properties.

Other measures to protect the environment include those aimed at air and climate protection, soil and groundwater protection. Expenditure on these and other measures by industries, governments and households are also included in the report *Environment Protection Expenditure, Australia, 1995–96 and 1996–97* (Cat. No. 4603.0). Included also are revised figures for 1995–96, previously published.

As a special data service, State data splits are available for some items. In addition disaggregated data for noise and vibration abatement, hazardous and non-hazardous waste management are also available

For further information contact Bob Harrison on 02 6252 7369, or bob.harrison@abs.gov.au.

One in five Queenslanders has a disability: ABS

In 1998, an estimated 686,700 or approximately one in five Queenslanders had a disability. Of these, 87% had either an activity, schooling or employment restriction.

Younger Queenslanders were less likely to suffer from disabilities, with only 10% of 15 to 24 year olds having a disability compared with almost 90% of Queenslanders aged 85 and over.

Just over one third of Queenslanders with a disability had a profound or severe activity restriction. Of these, 31,400, or 14%, had arthritis and related disorders as their main condition.

An estimated 370,100 Queenslanders with a disability needed assistance with everyday tasks. The primary providers were informal providers such as partners, parents, children and friends. Formal providers also played a part with some people receiving care from both types of providers.

For the 181,700 older persons (aged 65 years or more) needing assistance with at least one activity, the most common areas of need were property maintenance (106,800), health care (88,200) and transport (79,200).

The principal source of cash income for most older Queenslanders with a disability was a government pension or allowance (81%). A further 10% reported superannuation or annuity, dividend or interest as their principal source of cash income.

There were an estimated 83,600 primary carers in Queensland in 1998. Over half (51%) of them were in the age range 35–54, with a further 28% aged 55 and over. The main reported reasons for taking on the caring role were “family responsibility” (50,500), “could provide better care” (32,300) and “emotional obligation” (28,300).

For further details see *Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary Tables, Queensland* (Cat. No. 4430.3.40.001) or contact Elvie Yates on 02 6252 6316 or elvie.yates@abs.gov.au.

SOCIAL TRENDS

ABS releases latest social trends in Australia

The 1999 *Australian Social Trends* presents a complex and revealing picture of the way we are and how we are set for on-going social change into the next century, reporting:

Baby-boomers projected to have strong impact on ageing trend: As the youngest of the baby-boom generation turn 65 in 2031, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over is projected to reach between 21% and 22%, up from 12% in 1997.

Our standard working week is disappearing: The proportion of employed people working 35–44 hours a week fell from 42% to 36% between 1988 and 1998. At the same time, the proportions who worked longer hours and shorter hours both increased.

Men and women in the job market: In September 1998, among people aged 15–64 years not fully employed, there were more women than men wanting work—1.2 million women compared to 909,000 men. However, among those wanting work, a lower proportion of women were actively looking for work. With many in part-time jobs underemployment is an issue.

Older jobseekers find it harder in the marketplace: Older jobseekers (aged 45–59) are less successful in obtaining work than younger jobseekers. Jobs they do find are more likely to be part-time or casual, and low-paid.

Older people spend a lot of time alone: In 1997, 32% of people aged 65 years and over lived alone. On average, these

people spent nearly 12 and a half hours per day (79% of their waking time) alone.

Mum still looks after the children when both parents work: In families where both parents worked full-time, mothers spent about twice as much time as fathers on child care in 1997 (about 4 hours for mothers and 2 hours for fathers). Women also did more of the domestic work, even when they were working similar hours to their partners.

Almost half of Australians gamble: Of adults (18 years and over) surveyed in 1996/97 almost half (46%) had participated in some form of legalised gambling in the previous week.

Information technology comes home: The use of information technology in the home is rapidly increasing. Between 1994 and 1998 the proportion of all households with a computer rose from 29% to 47%. Between 1996 and 1998 the proportion with access to the internet rose from 4% to 19%.

We love to watch television in our free time: In 1997, Australians enjoyed an average of over five hours of free time per day. The most popular free-time activities were watching TV and videos; socialising and talking; listening to the radio and reading.

Our inner cities are home to more people: Inner cities are becoming more popular places to live and have appeal for relatively young, financially advantaged adults seeking to live close to work and entertainment.

Further details see *Australian Social Trends 1999* (Cat. No. 4102.0), available from our bookshop at 313 Adelaide St, Brisbane, Ph: 07 3222 6351.

Improving Indigenous Identification in Registered Births and Deaths Statistics

It has been widely recognised that indigenous identification in administrative by-product statistics is seriously deficient. Accurate data are essential to provide an effective framework for assessing the health, social and economic status of Australia's indigenous people, and for developing effective policy initiatives to address priority issues.

Over the last 12 months, the ABS, through the joint efforts of the National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (NCATSIS) in Darwin and our Health and Vitals National Project Centre in Brisbane, has been a driving force in setting up State and Territory based Working Parties throughout Australia. These Working Parties represent organisations interested in actively promoting the improvement of indigenous identification in administrative by-product statistics.

The initial aim of the Working Parties has been to develop and implement strategies to improve indigenous identification for registered births and deaths. Because of its responsibility for the production of national vitals statistics, the ABS Health and Vitals National Project Centre in Brisbane played a major coordinating role.

Considerable effort has been invested in examining and modifying, where necessary, data capture and processing methodology, and some initial data improvements are expected as a result. In addition, work is underway to raise awareness of the need for accurate indigenous identification and to elicit the commitment of a wide range of stake holders to improve all aspects of the identification process.

There is no 'quick fix' for the current problem, but, through the efforts of all concerned, it is expected that progressive and significant improvement in the quality of indigenous births and deaths statistics, will occur.

For further information contact Jane Hawthorne on 07 3222 6308 or jane.hawthorne@abs.gov.au.

If you wish to receive this newsletter electronically contact:

Martin Smart
 Telephone: 07 3222 6232
 Fax: 07 3222 6104
 Email: martin.smart@abs.gov.au

Wage Cost Index

Why develop a Wage Cost Index?

In recent years, the method of wage determination has moved away from award-based centralised wage fixing in favour of agreements at the enterprise, workplace and individual employee levels. This has resulted in the need for a measure of changes in the price of labour services which takes into account changes caused by both awards and agreements, but remain unaffected by compositional shifts in the employee workforce. The Wage Cost Index was developed in response to this demand.

What does the Wage Cost Index measure?

The Wage Cost Index is a 'pure' price index measuring changes over time in hourly wage and salary rates of pay for employee jobs, which are unaffected by changes in the quantity and quality of work performed.

Where to from here?

In addition to the Wage Cost Index, the ABS will be developing a full Labour Cost Index (LCI) which will measure the combined effect of changes in wage and selected non-wage labour costs. Non-wage costs are expected to include the impact of changes in employer funded superannuation, workers' compensation, payroll tax, fringe benefits tax and paid leave.

Data available

The Wage Cost Index was compiled for the first time for the December quarter 1997 (with a base of September quarter 1997=100.0). Four component sets of indexes comprise the Wage Cost Index. These include:

- Ordinary Time hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses;
- Ordinary Time hourly rates of pay including bonuses;
- Total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses; and
- Total hourly rates of pay including bonuses.

Series for selected combinations of state, sector, industry and occupation are released in the quarterly publication *Wage Cost Index, Australia* (Cat. no. 6345.0) and via the ABS on-line data service PCAusstats. Further unpublished series may also be available.

For more information contact Carrington Shepherd on 08 9360 5151 or carrington.shepherd@abs.gov.au.

Building Classifications Under Review

The ABS is conducting a user focused review of the main classifications used in building data. In recent times there has been criticism that these classifications have not reflected the intended main purpose of the building. Early indications from the initial round of user consultations suggest major revisions to functional classifications, especially to non residential classifications.

The review investigated:

- the main users and uses of data based on the functional classifications of buildings;
- the "type of work" classification used by the ABS Building Approvals and Building Activity Collections

- perceived deficiencies in the current classifications and how this affects users of the data;
- emerging trends and how these impact on classifications; and
- the relationship with Building Code of Australia and Census of Population and Housing.

Review findings are due to be released for external comment in late July, with a copy of the report being available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au). Key clients with a known interest in this data will be emailed a copy of this report by their Qld Account Manager.

For further information contact Ross Hamilton on 02 6252 6973 or ross.hamilton@abs.gov.au.

INTERNET ISSUES

Australia Now—An Internet Hit

Since the release of the *Australia Now—A Statistical Profile* the ABS website has moved into the top 200 most accessed sites in Australia, averaging approximately 10,000 internet visits daily.

Containing material similar to the Year Book, *Australia Now* covers a wide range of economic and social statistics to provide a comprehensive guide and dynamic compendium of textual and statistical information relating to Australia. However, unlike the Year Book which captures a statistical snapshot of the nation on an annual basis, *Australia Now* will be updated regularly with the latest data.

It also serves as a directory to other ABS statistics and contains descriptive information about Australia's government, international relations, defence, geography and climate. Complementing the arrangement will be extensive linking to the latest main feature statistics issued by the ABS.

Australia Now—A Statistical Profile may be accessed on the Internet at www.abs.gov.au.

Internet Access

For 24 hour statistics, access the
ABS Statsite at

www.abs.gov.au

Interesting hotlinks include:

- *ABS Statsite*
- *What's New*
- *Latest Media Release*
- *Today's Release Advice*
- *Access to ABS Products and Services*
- *Australia Now—A Statistical Profile of Australia*

ABS website self adhesive computer terminal stickers are available from Graham Thomas on 02 6252 6364; graham.thomas@abs.gov.au.

The ABS encourages responses to articles in this newsletter and welcomes your suggestions for future issues.

Contact Martin Smart on:
Telephone: 07 3222 6232
Fax: 07 3222 6104
Email: martin.smart@abs.gov.au

ABS STATISTICAL TRAINING

ABS Statistical Training is now available!

Who can benefit from our services?

If you are designing a survey, concerned about data quality or have rusty data analysis techniques, then the ABS Statistical Consultancy service can provide you with the tools and skills to help.

Who provides the statistical training and what is it all about?

Our experienced and professional consultants provide a range of training in designing questionnaires, surveys, analysing data and managing the survey process. Our courses provide you with the knowledge as well as practical skills in these techniques. Our unit is able to provide customised training and is well supported by its sophisticated and high class equipment and facilities.

When is the training held?

Our current courses and their schedule for presentation is as follows:

- **Introduction to Statistics** **26 and 27 July**
- **Basic Survey Design** **25 and 26 August**
- **Basic Statistical Analysis** **26 and 27 October**
- **Turning Data Into Information** **24 and 25 November**

Participants receive a complete set of notes including a copy of the slide presentation. We also offer hands-on computer based training for teaching analysis techniques.

How do I obtain further information?

For further information on course content, prices and availability, please contact our Statistical Consultancy Unit on 07 3222 6155 or 07 3222 6103 or rebecca.cassidy@abs.gov.au.

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The intention is to distribute further editions of "Statistical Update". Can you please help us ensure we manage a current and appropriate mailing list by:

- indicating any change in your details
- adding an additional recipient for *Statistical Update*
- informing us you no longer require *Statistical Update*

Please notify us by contacting:

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Telephone Inquiry Service

Telephone 07 3222 6351
Consultants will assist with your statistical inquiries and consultancies.



Internet Site

www.abs.gov.au
email client.services@abs.gov.au



Bookshop

Current for sale copies of ABS publications and floppy disks. Visit us on the 18th floor at 313 Adelaide St; 8.30am-4.30 pm



Library

The Library is situated alongside our bookshop and provides a complete range of ABS current and historical publications.

State Government Contact

Debra McDonald
Telephone 07 3222 6083
Email debra.mcdonald@abs.gov.au

or

Sally Barrett
Telephone 07 3222 6068
Email sally.barrett@abs.gov.au

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