

Forward Work Program **2006–07 to 2008–09**

Australian Bureau of Statistics



Australian Bureau of Statistics

Forward Work Program 2006–07 to 2008–09

Australian Bureau of Statistics
Canberra

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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 leadership and coordination function with respect to the statistical activities of other official bodies, both in Australia and overseas.

This document describes the strategic directions we will be adopting and the forward work program, and key developments, for our statistical and other areas.

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 2006

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 that will assist users in analysing and interpreting the statistics and includes 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>>.

Resources

Resource costs presented in the publication reflect the actual direct costs, and projected direct costs, for the upcoming triennium for each program area. They are presented as a broad indication of the resources expected to be allocated to each program and should not be taken as accurate financial estimates for those areas.

Direct costs are those costs which can be linked directly to the production of program outputs. They include the salaries, internally charged computing costs and administrative costs of the organisational units making up the program area. Indirect costs, such as data collection and processing and corporate services provided by centralised support areas are not included.

The 2004–05 figures are actual accrual expenditure for that year. The 2005–06 figures are full year projections based on actual costs incurred to early 2006. The forward year resources (i.e. 2006–07 and after) reflect the allocations currently held against those areas in the ABS forward budget estimates.

The forward year estimates assume that current organisational arrangements continue over the period. They include funding transfers, already known and reflected in the ABS forward budgets, associated with shifts in work programs between areas. However, forward year estimates do not necessarily take account of other transfers, which may occur between programs, and are yet to be determined. (These transfers include expected savings or additional expected funding). Consequently, resource information may be incomplete for the forward years for some program areas when compared to 2004–05 and 2005–06 figures.

For technology services, resources are reflected in aggregate against the Technology Services program. The internal cost to program areas using technology services on a cost recovered basis are also reflected in the program resources. The extent to which the use of technology services for forward years can be estimated varies across programs. Resource costs are therefore not directly comparable across programs in the forward years.

Staff usage

Staff usage figures comprise full time staff, and full time equivalent figures for part time staff. Inoperative staff are excluded. Staff usage figures are outcomes for 2004–05.



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

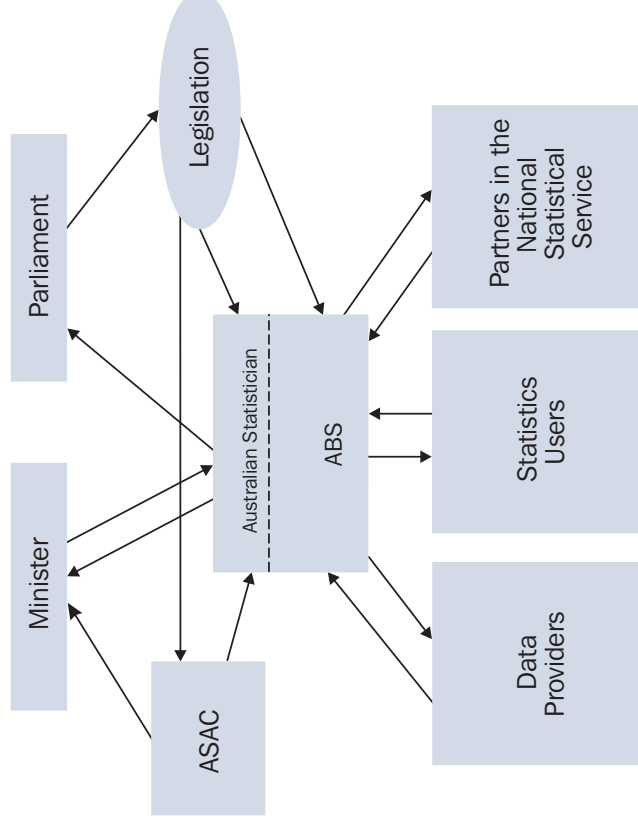
- Established and ensures the independence of both the ABS and the Australian Statistician
- Describes the functions of the ABS
- Requires ABS to advise parliament of proposals for new collections
- Established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council
- Requires ABS and ASAC to report to Parliament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

ABS Functions

- To constitute the central 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

"we assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading 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
- ABS services that are timely, relevant, responsive and respected for their integrity and quality
- Informed and increased use of statistics
- A key contributor to international statistical activities that are important to Australia or our region
- An organisation that builds capability to continually improve its effectiveness
- The trust and cooperation of our providers
- ABS is a respected and strongly supported organisation.

Core Values

- Integrity
- Service
- Professionalism
- Relevance
- Trust of providers
- Access for All.

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 is a key part of the strategic planning process. The plan describes our working environment and outlines our mission and values. It describes the objectives the ABS will pursue to fulfil its mission over the next 3 to 5 years and the strategies we will adopt. It sets out the directions we want the ABS to take to meet our future challenges.

The ABS has recently reviewed its corporate plan. The refreshed plan was released in December 2005. The statement of mission, values, objectives and related strategies in the corporate plan provides the higher level frame within which this rolling three-year ABS forward work program has been developed, and within which future work programs will be developed. It provides the broad context for ensuring 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.

Mission

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

Values

The ABS and its staff uphold the APS Values and Code of Conduct. ABS values, which are congruent with the APS values, are material to our role as an independent provider of information for Australia. Our values are:

- integrity
- service
- professionalism
- relevance
- trust of providers
- access for all.

The ABS values encompass what we believe and shape how we behave. 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 has the following objectives:

1. An expanded and improved national statistical service
2. ABS services that are timely, relevant, responsive, and respected for their integrity and quality
3. Informed and increased use of statistics
4. A key contributor to international statistical activities that are important to Australia or our region
5. An organisation that builds capability to continually improve its effectiveness
6. The trust and cooperation of our providers
7. ABS is a respected and strongly supported organisation.

How the ABS Determines Statistical Priorities

The provision of a high quality national statistical service is a complex management exercise due to the diverse nature of user requirements and, in most instances, the lead time required to develop or update 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.

How the ABS understands client needs

For the ABS, determining future priorities involves consulting and planning with statistics users. Statistics users are consulted to determine their information needs. These are an input to decisions on 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.

A list of user groups the ABS organises for consultation on work program decisions is provided in the Appendix.

How the ABS determines its work program

The ABS mission statement and corporate plan provide the context and high level framework for making decisions on the ABS's forward work program.

While much of the ABS work program remains constant from year to year, some resources are always made available to pursue new high priority work.

Within this framework, the annual ABS planning cycle comprises a structured series of high level meetings and forums where senior managers formally and extensively consider the relative priorities and competing resource requirements of program components. In doing this, particular attention is given to:

- input from user consultations
- 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 contribution statistical activities make to achieving National Statistical Service objectives
- 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.

Aspects of the proposed forward work program and resource estimates which emerge are considered by the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC). The statistical work program is then finalised in the light of ASAC advice.

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 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.



How the ABS Operates *continued*

Functional areas undertaking statistical operations

Once statistical priorities have been set, through consultation and planning with statistics users, the ABS sets up arrangements for **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 of 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 (on page 11).

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 achieved. 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 (ESDC); 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 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. They develop dissemination strategies; manage the delivery of the initial publications and other outputs from each collection; and coordinate evaluation of the survey process.

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.

How the ABS Operates *continued*

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 **Services Group** makes a contribution to the ABS' ability to successfully achieve its business objectives, through the delivery of corporate and technology services. The national **Corporate Services Division (CSD)** is responsible for recruitment, development and retention of the workforce needed to deliver the ABS work program; for the provision of leadership in driving cultural change; and for ensuring staff have a healthy, safe and functional working environment. **Technology Services Division (TSD)** provides ABS staff with stable, reliable, and secure information technology infrastructure, including hardware, software and network facilities. TSD 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. They also develop 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.

The Services Group also undertakes a range of **statistical leadership activities** aimed at increasing the understanding and use of statistics by government, research organisations and the wider community. The financial functions and responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer role are also included in the Services Group.

The Office of the Statistician is responsible for key corporate functions which support the Australian Statistician's administrative and statistical roles. The Office manages: relationships with key external stakeholders including the Minister, the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) and the media; corporate governance activities including compliance with legislation under which the ABS operates; ABS' international activities; and strategic and work program planning and budget allocation.

Several programs within the ABS provide the infrastructure 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 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.

Governance and Legislation

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 Office of the Statistician 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 Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC). ASAC 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, 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 2004–05, a review of key enterprise risks was undertaken, resulting in a rationalisation and re-specification of the ABS' key enterprise risks.

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.

Governance and Legislation *continued*

■ 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; 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.

Authority and Legislation

The principal legislation determining the functions and responsibilities of the ABS is contained in 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.

Governance and Legislation *continued*

All state and territory governments are represented on ASAC. The other Council members are chosen to represent a broad cross-section of perspectives, covering government, business, academic and community interests.

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 (since 1924 for Tasmania). Although not covered by legislation, similar arrangements apply in both territories. There is regular consultation with state and territory governments on statistical priorities.

Products and Services

Statistical releases

ABS releases comprise monthly, quarterly, annual and irregular products. In 2004–05 there were over 800 statistical releases.

Electronic products and data services

The ABS' principal means of releasing statistical information is through the ABS web site. From December 2005 all published data have been made available free of charge from the ABS web site. The ABS' electronic services include:

- the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>> provides free access to a full range of electronic publications and ABS statistics, as well as news, media releases, directories, technical material and information about the ABS
- remote access microdata services which provide support for secondary analysis of ABS data whilst ensuring the confidentiality of individual survey respondents
- 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 CDATA 2001 which contains 2001 Census data
- a free email notification service providing details of, and access to, ABS daily releases in subject areas nominated by clients
- a Real Simple Syndication (RSS) news feed allowing subscribers to access ABS statistical headlines from their desk top
- a secure e-commerce facility to allow clients to order products in hard copy.

Publications

In 2004–05 the ABS produced 340 publication titles (including electronic only publications) comprising 837 separate releases (several 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). The full range of products is available through the ABS web site, National Information Referral Service (NIRS) and over the counter from some ABS offices.

Library Extension Program (LEP)

Selected ABS paper publications are distributed to over 520 libraries. These include the National Library, state libraries, parliamentary libraries, all university libraries and a number of TAFE and public libraries.

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 or fax. The NIRS also provides advice and referral to other ABS information services for more detailed statistics. This service includes 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 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 to federal government departments and statutory authorities 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 that 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 obligation

The ABS fulfils the community service obligation for statistics by:

- including all published ABS information in the basic set, which is available for access on the ABS website free of charge
- providing a selected set of paper publications, free of charge, to all participating libraries of the ABS Library Extension Program
- offering a National Information and Referral Service.

Approaches to cost recovery

Products in 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.

Organisations on-selling ABS data are required to sign a licensing agreement covering the provision of data not contained in the basic set. This arrangement ensures that intermediaries provide the ABS with an equitable share of the costs for the creation and dissemination of such data. As part of the agreement, intermediaries are required to make information on the context and limitations of data available to their clients, to ensure proper use of ABS data.

Top Structure

Australian Statistician



Dennis Trewin

Deputy Australian Statisticians



Peter Harper
Economic
Statistics



Susan Linacre
Population
Statistics



Jonathan Palmer
Services

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



Jenine Borowik
Technology
Services



Julia Burns
Corporate
Services

Regional Directors



Ian Ewing
New South Wales



Vince Lazzaro
Victoria



Malcolm Greig
Queensland
(Acting)



Alan Hubbard
Western Australia



Mike McGrath
South Australia



Dick Crockett
Tasmania



Robyn Elliott
Northern Territory



Karen Vitullo
Australian
Capital Territory

Top Structure *continued*

Assistant Statisticians



Paul Sullivan
Economy Wide
Statistics



Robin Slater
Economic
Statistics



Steve Crabb
Integration,
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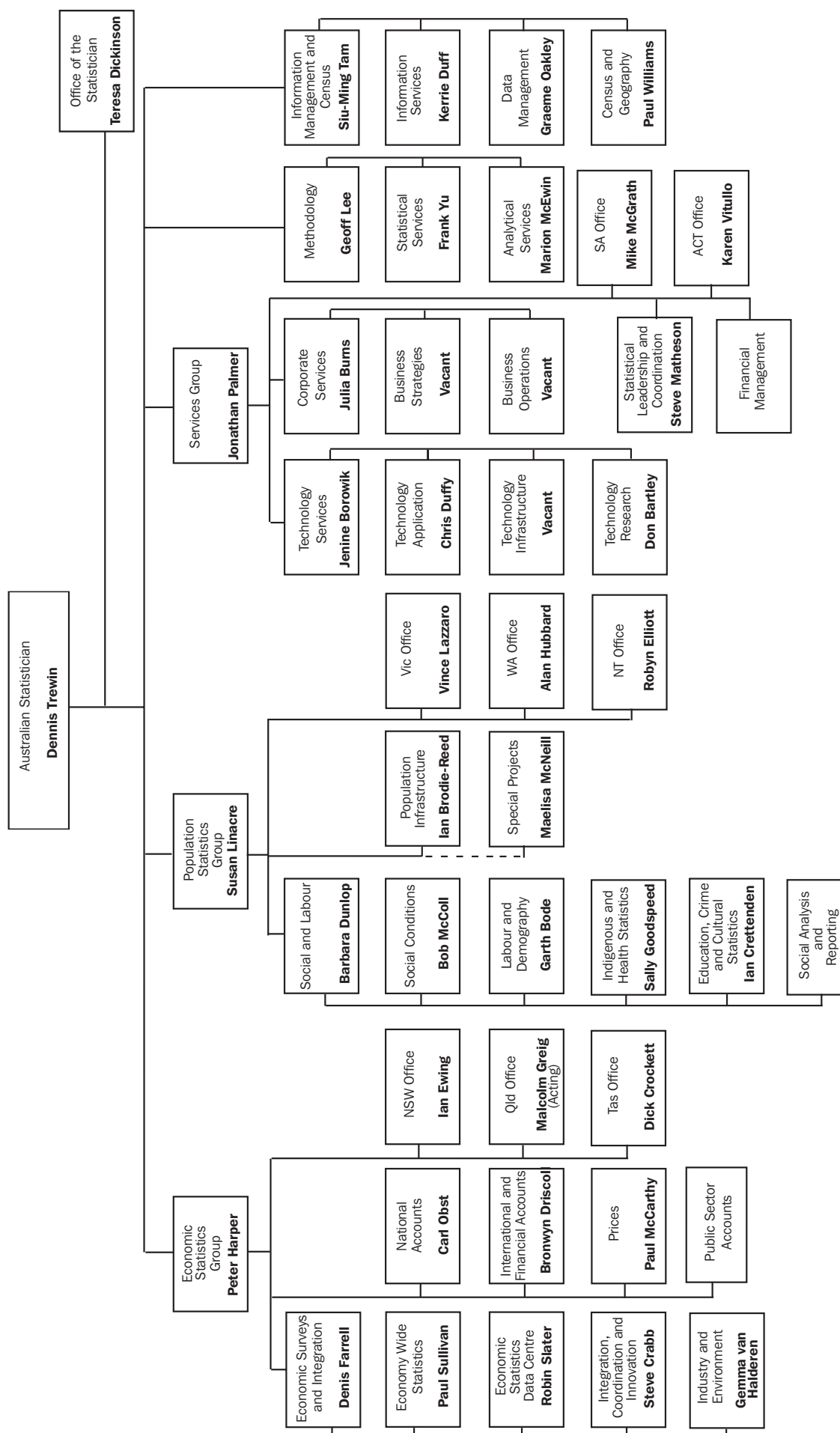


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Top Structure *continued*



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ABS FORWARD WORK PROGRAM 2006–07 TO 2008–09

ABS Strategic Directions

Introduction

Each year the ABS work program is established in response to current and emerging statistical priorities of users and in the broader context of the ABS mission and overall strategic directions. This statement of strategic directions therefore presents the broad objectives that the ABS has chosen to pursue which shape its priorities and work program for the period 2006–07 to 2008–09.

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 the resources allocated to it.

In this chapter the key drivers of the ABS work program are described, with a summary of key initiatives the ABS will pursue in response to them. More detailed directions and strategies for the next three years are then described in terms of the two main statistical programs, Economic Statistics and Population Statistics, along with the range of programs and activities which support the production of their statistical outputs.

Key drivers of the ABS work program

The ABS Corporate Plan has been reviewed and a refreshed version released in December 2005. The plan describes seven broad objectives which provide the framework for ABS forward work planning:

1. An expanded and improved national statistical service
2. ABS services that are timely, relevant, responsive and respected for their integrity and quality
3. Informed and increased use of statistics
4. A key contributor to international statistical activities that are important to Australia or our region
5. An organisation that builds capability to continually improve its effectiveness
6. The trust and cooperation of our providers
7. ABS is a respected and strongly supported organisation.

In recent years the ABS has worked to strengthen client engagement and improve responsiveness to their needs, to raise the profile of its externally focussed activities, and to increase the informed use of statistics. These outcomes remain a priority for the current forward work program. Consistent with these aims, the forward work program for 2006–07 to 2008–09 places a strong emphasis on corporate objectives 1 and 2.

The ABS undertakes ongoing programs of consultations with key stakeholders and clients, which aim to identify and prioritise areas of statistical demand that are currently unmet. In addition, the ABS undertakes environmental scanning, to identify significant changes that may impact on what ABS clients require and how they use statistics. The information gathered in these exercises is used to develop detailed strategies and set internal work program priorities. Recent exercises have identified the following as key drivers of the current ABS forward work program:

- increasing complexity of the Australian economy and society, meaning that production of existing statistics is often commensurately more complex
- increasing plurality of statistical data providers driving a need to ensure that the overall national statistical system (NSS) is coordinated and that the ABS role in this system is clearly defined
- increasing demands for access to microdata, data relating to particular population groups, 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 and to create a staff profile more appropriate to the ABS' future skill needs.

The ABS forward work program for 2006–07 to 2008–09 has been developed in response to these drivers.

ABS Strategic Directions for 2006–07 to 2008–09

The two broad programs producing and disseminating ABS statistics are Economic Statistics and Population Statistics. While each program produces statistics specific to its subject matter, many of the broad strategic directions are the same. Details of the current key strategic directions across both programs are provided below against the ABS' corporate plan objectives.

1. An expanded and improved national statistical service

The ABS will continue to work with stakeholders to develop and support the National Statistical Service by jointly identifying and communicating information needs and by supporting agreed strategies to meet identified priorities.

Major projects

The ABS has decided to give particular emphasis to the pursuit of the following projects for the start of the triennium.

■ Environment statistics

Australia's system of environment statistics is in need of improvement. Respecting custodianship of existing datasets, the ABS will work in close partnership with others to deliver an enduring system of environment statistics that is relevant; accurate; regular, frequent and timely; easily understood and accessible; and able to be integrated with other data.

■ Population wellbeing

In association with key client agencies, the ABS will undertake a process to identify the major gaps in data required to support the policy agenda for population wellbeing. This process will prioritise needs and determine how to provide a more effective body of information, from ABS and external sources, for statistical use.

■ Upgrade the availability of regional statistics

Recent advances in managing and reporting data at small geographic levels will be used to support the geographic classification of administrative data sets and to allow better access to high priority data sets through ABS regional statistics data bases, the National Data Network and other means. One possible outcome is a better set of community statistics.

■ Census Data Enhancement

The central feature of the Census Data Enhancement project is the creation of a Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD). This involves combining the information provided in the 2006 Population Census for 5% of the population with information provided in future censuses, using statistical matching techniques rather than exact matches. The project includes using the Census data in combination with a limited number of other selected data sets. These data sets include ABS household surveys, birth and death register, disease register data and information on overseas arrivals and departures. The SLCD will provide a means to identify patterns in pathways of social and economic circumstances, for individuals and households over time.

■ National Data Network

The National Data Network (NDN) is a national platform for acquiring, sharing and integrating data relevant to policy and research. The network provides infrastructure for the controlled and secure distribution of data from custodian to user. It also incorporates services to enhance data quality in production, publishing and use. Currently the NDN is in demonstration phase with the core infrastructure nearing completion. It is scheduled to commence full production in 2007. Once in production, a growth strategy will be pursued for the NDN which will expand the number of contributors and the range of services offered.

Information Development Plans (IDPs)

This work will include collaboration with key agencies in developing, updating and implementing IDPs, which identify priorities for improving key statistics required for research and policy analysis by governments and the community. The plans establish shared responsibility between the ABS and other data custodians and major users for collaborative work to address highest priority data needs.

For economic statistics, work on manufacturing and mining IDPs will be finalised. IDPs for Innovation, and for Information and Communication Technology, will be updated. The outputs of the Business Indicators program will be reviewed to identify any data or information gaps and strategies will be developed to address these. Priority strategies identified through the Agriculture IDP will be implemented.

In population statistics, ABS has gathered considerable information on key issues and data needs in respect of older people and ageing, and children and youth, as well as statistical needs for emergency management. This information will feed into IDPs, which will prioritise specific actions for ABS and other key partners in these fields. Work will continue to implement and update IDPs, or their equivalent, already developed in other fields, such as crime and justice; education and training; health, including Indigenous health; community services; and rural and regional services.

User consultations, agreements and strategic relationships

The ABS will continue to consult with a broad range of user groups and advisory boards, and will participate in relevant government and industry forums to ensure its forward work program remains relevant. Inter-jurisdictional agreements in sectors such as health, education and criminal justice will 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. For economic statistics, regular contact will be maintained with stakeholders on key economic and environment statistics outputs and issues, particularly Commonwealth, state and territory Treasuries, the Reserve Bank and the Department of Environment and Heritage. The ABS will partner other stakeholders in the environment statistics field to develop a comprehensive, accessible and enduring set of environment statistics. Bilateral liaison committees will be maintained to strengthen strategic relationships with partners in the National Statistical Service, such as with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR). Discussions with stakeholders in the construction and transport industries will seek to determine levels of interest and support for establishment of Statistics User Groups in these areas.

The ABS will continue to support the 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 for 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).

The ABS will continue its practice of placing strategic liaison officers within key agencies to assist in the development of a shared understanding of Australia's statistical system, and to support development of statistical skills across that system. Placements include the Departments of:

- Employment and Workplace Relations
- Education, Science and Training
- Industry, Tourism and Resources
- the Australian Tax Office
- Commonwealth Grants Commission and
- Productivity Commission
- Department of Health and Ageing and
- Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

In addition, the ABS will look for opportunities to undertake collaborative work with its partners in the NSS, through jointly funded centres, work programs, research projects and publications. Over the coming year the ABS will work with the Department of Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) to establish a National Migrant Statistics Unit Centre to improve the information base relating to migrant settlement in Australia. Ongoing units in relation to Crime and Justice, and Education will continue to develop information bases in their respective fields.

Improving the statistical value of administrative data

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. Integration across ABS and non ABS statistical collections, as well as administrative systems will also be pursued as opportunities arise. The ABS will continue to work with jurisdictions' crime courts and corrections agencies to improve the comparability of, and access to, data in these fields. It will also work with Registrars in the jurisdictions to standardise and quality assure the birth and death information collected. The ABS will also continue to work with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority and the ATO to develop statistical capability within those agencies, and the potential for expanded use of administrative or jointly collected data, to supplement or replace ABS directly collected data.

Statistical standards and methodologies

Development is continuing on data dictionaries, classifications and other statistical standards for both survey and administrative data, notably in the fields of health, crime and justice, education and training, and transport. These products will extend the range of tools available to improve data comparability across administrative collections and enhance their relatability to survey data.

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. In population statistics, ANZSCO, the new standard classification of occupations, will be implemented in the 2006 Census and relevant ABS collections. Support for the uptake of statistical standards outside the ABS will be provided.

2. ABS services that are timely, relevant, responsive and respected for their integrity and quality

The ABS will continue to work closely with key statistics users, through advisory groups and other mechanisms identified above, to understand the purposes for which ABS data are used.

Particular areas of focus over the coming year for population statistics relate to the rebasing of the population estimates following the 2006 Census. To better inform users on quality, and to adjust for undercount, the Census Post Enumeration Survey is being extended this year to include remote Indigenous Communities and some categories of non private dwellings previously excluded. Information papers will be published on the Post Enumeration Survey and the use of the data in estimation.

In the area of economic statistics, activities will include the conduct of the five yearly Agricultural Census, the Retail and Wholesale Surveys and the redevelopment of the ABS Business Register. ABS will also participate in the development and maintenance of economic classifications and standards, including upgraded international standards. Educating and supporting users in their application of these standards will be a key priority.

Increasing use of administrative data

Further opportunities will be sought for ABS to make use of administrative data for statistical purposes. For economic statistics, wider use of Business Activity Statement data will be investigated, as a supplement to, or replacement for, directly collected data. For population statistics, the possibility of using administrative data to improve the accuracy of population estimates at state and sub-state levels will be explored. The Census Data Enhancement project will also be used to evaluate the quality of birth and death information flows in the period around the census. A new methodology will also be developed and implemented to improve estimation of international migration. .

Reviewing programs, priorities, products and services

ABS will continue to work closely with its clients to ensure the ongoing relevance of its products and services. The population statistics program undertakes a major review of its household survey program about every five years, to ensure emerging issues are being adequately addressed and ongoing measurements remain relevant. A review is underway that will report in late 2006. This review across the survey program is supplemented by reviews within specific areas of statistics, with a particular focus on health, Indigenous and crime and justice surveys over the coming year. In addition, a broader review of information gaps in measuring population wellbeing will be undertaken. This review will consider unmet information needs and potential strategies for addressing them, taking the full NSS information capability into account.

Work will continue to improve the ABS' ability to respond to new and changing needs of ABS clients, by continuing to keep work program priorities under review and by maintaining some flexibility in allocation of resources. In addition, ABS will look for opportunities to work with other agencies, drawing on their resources and expertise, to improve our ability to respond to needs at short notice. As an example of this more flexible approach, 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.

ABS Strategic Directions *continued*

The Economic Statistics program is continuing the development of a Business Longitudinal Database (BLD), drawing together information on small to medium enterprises from a range of sources, including the ATO, to form a rich data set. As this project progresses, the ABS will consult with users to determine their analytical requirements from the BLD, and wherever possible, incorporate the necessary content and functionality in the database design. For financial statistics, recommendations of a review of lending finance publications will be implemented, to enhance content, bring release dates forward and review the frequency of statistics.

Across the ABS, opportunities for forming partnerships for the dissemination of analytic content will be taken up as they arise, particularly in relation to Indigenous statistics. To enable ABS to respond to user demand that exceeds ABS budget capacity, a number of user funded surveys are conducted in addition to those funded as core ABS activities.

Enhancing and expanding current ABS statistics

The ABS is looking to develop its own data sources to expand the amount and usefulness of data available to inform decision making among governments and the community. The Census Data Enhancement project will develop a longitudinal view of the Australian population for statistical studies bringing census data together with key data sources from within the ABS, as well as a limited set of external data sources.

In economic statistics, work is underway on development of enhanced productivity statistics and an improved range of water accounts. Land parcel and mesh block spatial data methodologies are being implemented for measuring natural resource management at the regional level.

Where changes occur to economic statistics through the introduction of new standards, concepts and methods, continuity of time series will be maintained to ensure statistics remain consistent and fit for purpose.

Opportunities will be taken to work collaboratively with key stakeholders in the use of economic microdata, to assist the ABS to make better use of its comprehensive data holdings. ESG will undertake reviews of data clearance processes and tools, with a continued strong focus on protecting confidentiality.

3. Informed and increased use of statistics

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 promote the use of its website as the principal dissemination channel for statistics. The website is under continuous review, to improve site accessibility, useability, functionality and reliability. As part of this process the ABS consults widely with users to determine their priorities for improvement, and also engages users to test the upgraded site before wider public release. The website has undergone significant change in the past year to support access to free statistics and further changes are planned to ensure the site can continue to meet user demands for information.

To support informed use of statistics, more information will be provided about the data available from the ABS and on the quality of statistics, ABS will seek to present information in a form that is accessible and well understood by users. Information papers, technical notes and special articles will be produced to explain upcoming changes to data (e.g. changes to classifications, frameworks and standards) and to support use of such data when released. More contextual metadata will be linked to statistical data, to assist users to assess whether statistical data are fit for their specific purposes. The ABS will better promote understanding and awareness of the range of information solutions available from the ABS.

Good statistical data and metadata management practices will be promoted and supported across the National Statistical System. In part, this will be achieved by working closely with NSS partners, such as the ATO where taxation statistics will be made more widely available by dissemination through the National Data Network. Within the ABS, development of more effective data management systems will enable existing statistics to be used in more innovative ways.

The ABS will continue to develop strategies to improve researcher access to, and use of, confidentialised unit record data for statistical purposes. Opportunities will be sought for collaborative analytical projects, to improve the availability and accessibility of economic statistics for researchers. Such access includes both on site and remote access and is within the framework of tight privacy management required by the secrecy provisions of the Census and Statistics Act.

The main effort, in terms of responsiveness, will go into ensuring ABS databases are set up in a way that requests for information, particularly more complex requests, can be addressed quickly. This is clearly the case for the Population Census but improvements are needed elsewhere. One important initiative is an Input Data Warehouse for data about businesses. This will enable the ABS to more easily address questions relating to businesses.

Another important way of improving responsiveness is to enable statistical users to "self help". A number of initiatives are targeted at the industry free data on the ABS website. Additionally, the Remote Access Data Laboratory and the Table Builder will enable authorised users to remotely generate their own tables from the 2006 Population Census.

4. A key contributor to international statistical activities that are important to Australia or our region

The ABS is an active participant in the development of international standards that impact on the Australian statistical system, and international comparability of statistics. This involves operating in close collaboration with international statistical agencies in the development and use of contemporary statistical methods, systems and strategies.

Strengthening statistical systems in the Asia-Pacific Region

The ABS takes an active role in the international statistical community, supporting activities and providing technical assistance to other countries in our region. Over the next three years, the ABS will contribute to strengthening statistical systems in the Asia-Pacific region by: undertaking statistical consultancies and conducting training courses in other countries; contributing to workshops or seminars arranged by international organisations; hosting study tours and training for international visitors; and by providing documentation on ABS practices and procedures. The ABS currently has formal arrangements in place with Indonesia, the Pacific Region and Vanuatu. Work will continue under these arrangements to strengthen the capacity of the national statistical offices and other relevant government agencies to effectively measure and report on economic and social issues. In terms of population statistics the areas where there is most demand for assistance from within Asia-Pacific region are in relation to population censuses, and the population count, labour statistics, and the measurement of disability; for economic statistics, demand exists for assistance in measurement and production of national accounts and related economic indicators, and statistics for main industries.

International statistical standards

The ABS will play a leadership role in the international statistical community with a focus on the availability of international data and their comparability across countries. This includes leading international work to update economic statistics standards such as the Balance of Payments Manual and the System of National Accounts, and the implementation of the International Comparison Project.

Strong links will be maintained through participation in statistical forums conducted by the United Nations Statistical Commission, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and other subject specific international bodies. In terms of population statistics, there is continuing international work in relation to developing standards for measurement of hours worked, resident population and migration. Work will be undertaken to facilitate international comparisons in areas such as crime rates, health, education, and literacy.

International statistical partnerships

ABS will collaborate with like organisations to build capability through the exchange of know-how. This relies on close relationships with a number of statistical agencies in developed countries. Bilateral discussions are scheduled with New Zealand for late 2006. Support will also continue to provide ABS staff with opportunities for employment in international agencies or national statistical organisations, on short-term contracts, to provide valuable professional development and exposure to global statistical matters.

5. An organisation that builds capability to continually improve its effectiveness

Strategies to improve recruitment and workforce planning in the ABS are currently being developed. The ABS human resources program is focusing on providing expert advice to assist areas recruit high quality staff, and do so quickly. This includes development, implementation and evaluation of workforce planning strategies which place the ABS in a better position to compete for the workforce it needs to deliver on its work program. Also included are:

- the identification of, and planning for, future business directions and workforce needs
- continual analysis of workforce data to provide greater knowledge and insight into the current workforce
- development of more effective succession planning, and attraction and retention policies
- and monitoring and evaluating the success of these strategies.

ABS Strategic Directions *continued*

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, and the need to recognise and reward outstanding performance. The ABS is committed to implementing effective performance management strategies and addressing issues raised through staff consultative forums and surveys.

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. Project management techniques and practices are supported and improved through the use of a custom designed project management framework. Internal capability is also being strengthened through restructured work arrangements based on new models for managing surveys and through reengineering methodologies and technologies to improve statistical integration. The new models and processes 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. For economic statistics, work continues to facilitate electronic data collection and transfer, delivering efficiencies by reducing the need for manual data entry. The Technology Services program will continue to guide, educate and support staff in statistical areas to adopt business process improvement tools, and will continue to support adoption of simpler, more integrated and effective technologies.

6. The trust and cooperation of our providers

The ABS ensures provider interests are fully integrated into strategic direction setting, alongside emerging interests of users. As a result there has been considerable success in recent years in reducing respondent burden, while at the same time significantly expanding the range of statistics available.

The substantial work program which progresses this objective overall will continue into the future, and includes:

- Business and Household Survey Charters
- provider portal on the ABS Website
- form and process design and testing
- business and household survey frame management and rotation strategies
- e-Census, CAI and Multi-Modal data developments
- interactions with Privacy Commissioners
- appointment of an ABS Privacy Manager
- advisory and implementation roles of the Data Access and Confidentiality Unit
- role of the Statistical Clearing House, ESSCC and PSPC in survey strategy scrutiny
- established MOU based data supply arrangements with ATO, APRA, Valuer Generals, Customs, Registries, etc
- publicity campaigns eg Population Census, Agriculture Census, etc
- efficient complaints handling processes and
- the dedicated focus of the Business Provider Relations Policy Committee, the Economic Statistics Data Centre (ESDC) and the Population Statistics Infrastructure Branch.

Most of the reductions in respondent burden in recent years 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. Further gains are expected over the three years of this work program, as the full potential of recent initiatives becomes realised.

For businesses, the focus has increased on improving communication, to ensure they are fully informed about the need for and uses of requested data, and have an awareness of the mutual obligations and assistance available. Effort is also being directed to improving data collection methods. For household surveys, the focus remains on ensuring interviewers are well trained in working with respondents to convey the respect the ABS has for their privacy. ABS staff will be encouraged to participate in education forums regarding confidentiality policy, practice and processes will be promoted. One additional challenge is the reporting load placed on Indigenous communities by a range of agencies. The ABS will work with these agencies to find ways of reducing this load, consistent with satisfying the essential information needs.

7. ABS is a respected and strongly supported organisation

The ABS' reputation as an organisation of high integrity is essential for it to continue to have the support of both providers and users of its statistics. ABS aims to strengthen this support through the strategies adopted to meet the objectives mentioned above. The ABS will continue to focus on risk management strategies, through the identification and management of enterprise, statistical and operational risks across the organisation.

The ABS will continue work to strengthen external relationships, particularly with the media, users of statistics, and the broader community. There will be increasing emphasis on building close relationships with other key stakeholders, including senior staff of other government agencies, and increased emphasis on ensuring relationship outposts are strategic, most particularly in terms of providing outposts which support National Statistical Service priorities.

The policy of high level "picture painting" initial results and compendia releases will continue, and will be targeted at informing the community about key social and economic issues. Indigenous community engagement is targeted at this strategy, as are the community awareness raising activities around the Census and liaison with public libraries.

In an environment of increasing concern over privacy and security, ABS has a dedicated privacy officer in place to increase the corporate focus on privacy related matters. ABS will implement procedures and policies to ensure that: all interactions by its staff outside the ABS are undertaken in a professional manner; stakeholders are engaged in a positive and supportive way through user groups and other forums and opportunities; errors, if any, are dealt with in an open and direct way; and that questions and complaints are dealt with quickly and effectively.

ECONOMIC STATISTICS GROUP

National Accounts

Program Manager

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Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05 4.7

05/06 5.2

06/07 5.4

07/08 5.7

08/09 5.4

Staff usage 2004/05

56 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 publications *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product* (cat. no. 5206.0) and *Australian National Accounts: Financial Accounts* (cat. no. 5232.0); and the annual publication *Australian System of National Accounts* (cat. no. 5204.0). Together these publications provide comprehensive measures of Australia's macroeconomic performance and economic structure.

The key series compiled relate to current price 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. The publications also show estimates for the national income and capital accounts, and sectors accounts such as for households and general government. Data on financial transactions, flow of funds and financial balance sheet positions are provided quarterly, and complete balance sheets for all sectors and the nation are compiled annually. The annual publication also includes a range of economic data by industry as well as capital stock and productivity estimates.

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 of the terms of trade; the relationship between growth rates in GDP and employment; estimates of productivity in the Australian national accounts; and an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) satellite account.

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:

- compile Input-Output tables for 2001–02 – due mid 2006
- complete a broad review of National Accounts data quality including undertaking analysis of revisions to key national accounts data items – due mid 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 end 2006
- improve the quality of estimates of productivity including the development of industry level multi-factor productivity estimates – due mid 2007
- improve the integration of National Accounts and Financial Accounts data and develop new quarterly income data for the financial sector – due end 2007
- develop complete quarterly balance sheets and income, capital and financial accounts for all sectors – due end 2007
- advance work on the measurement of non-profit institutions including development of sectoral accounts for non-profit institutions serving households – due end 2007
- undertake work to implement the forthcoming update of the international standard – System of National Accounts – due end 2009
- undertake work to implement the revised industry classification system Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 – due end 2009.

International Accounts

Program Manager

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Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	3.2
05/06	3.4
06/07	3.3
07/08	3.4
08/09	3.6

Staff usage 2004/05

40 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 (BOP) and international investment position and periodic information on the activities of non-resident affiliates of Australian enterprises and Australian affiliates of non-resident enterprises. The statistics are compiled from a range of statistical surveys and administrative data sources.

The main users of the BOP, international investment position, and foreign affiliates data are 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; Industry, Tourism and Resources; and 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, analyse trends in income and capital flows, understand patterns of investment into and out of the economy and determine foreign investment policy.

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.

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 seasonally adjusted data. 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.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement improved sources of data and methodologies for international trade in services, current transfers and compensation of employees – due November 2006
- develop a strategy for the collection and compilation of foreign affiliates statistics in consultation with key stakeholders – due December 2006
- complete a review of International Accounts data quality: identifying components which pose a risk; and improving the conceptual and methodological information available to users – due June 2007
- review BOP compilation methods with initial emphasis on compensation of employees, migrants' transfers and the allocation of BOP components by country, as part of the rolling program of review – due June 2008
- contribute to the finalisation of new international standards for International and National Accounts, the Balance of Payments Manual, Benchmark Definition of Foreign Direct Investment and the System of National Accounts; inform users of the implications of the new standards – due December 2008
- investigate improved seasonal adjustment techniques in BOP series: ensuring greater coherence between related series; investigating adjustment of additional component series; and reducing revisions by using modelling – ongoing.

International Trade

Program Manager

Bronwyn Driscoll
Assistant Statistician
International and
Financial Accounts
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	2.4
05/06	2.5
06/07	1.8
07/08	1.7
08/09	1.7

Staff usage 2004/05

25 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Foreign
Trade

Other references

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

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

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 Departments of: Foreign Affairs and Trade; Industry, Tourism and Resources; the Treasury; Austrade, and the Productivity Commission), state government agencies, analysts in industry associations, and importers and exporters.

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. Detailed merchandise import statistics are also made available electronically 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. Detailed merchandise export statistics are also made available electronically to clients. Very detailed merchandise trade data can be obtained from ABS Client Services. More detailed international trade in services data and data by partner country and state are released annually, as data cubes, on a calendar year and financial year basis, via the ABS web site.

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 are produced as appropriate and made available on the ABS web site, normally concurrently with the release of a particular monthly issue of *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0).

The program produces the *Australian Harmonized 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.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement improved sources of data and methodologies for international trade in travel and government services – due November 2006
- evaluate options for improving the coverage of the Survey of International Trade in Services – due December 2006
- implement revised international classifications (Harmonized System and Standard International Trade Classification) – due December 2006
- review questionnaires and induction program for the Survey of International Trade in Services to ensure that appropriate resident to non-resident activity is identified and efficiently collected from businesses – due June 2007
- review compilation methods for international trade in insurance and financial services as part of the rolling review program – due June 2008
- update concepts, sources and methods documentation for both merchandise trade and international trade in services to reflect changes in sources and methodologies – progressively to June 2008
- investigate the implications for merchandise trade and international trade in services statistics of new international standards for the Balance of Payments Manual and the System of National Accounts; inform users of the implications of the new standards – due December 2008.

Financial Statistics

Program Manager

Bronwyn Driscoll
Assistant Statistician
International and
Financial Accounts
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.4
05/06	1.5
06/07	1.5
07/08	1.6
08/09	1.5

Staff usage 2004/05

15 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Finance

Objectives

The Financial Statistics program compiles statistics on the financial assets, liabilities, borrowing and lending of financial institutions, and on the stocks and flows of finance for the various sectors of the economy. The statistics are sourced from several statistical surveys and administrative data sources.

Financial statistics are important inputs into Australia's financial accounts, and accordingly, the ABS National Accounts program is a key client of the Financial Statistics program.

The external 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 economic sectors or institutions. 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 *Managed Funds, Australia* (cat. no. 5655.0) which includes statistics for cash management trusts, superannuation funds, life insurance corporations, public unit trusts, common funds, and friendly societies. Information on securitisation trusts is released in the publication *Assets and Liabilities of Australian Securitised, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 5232.0.55.001).

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 statistics on commercial, personal and lease finance.

Statistics on the venture capital market are released in the annual *Venture Capital, Australia* (cat. no. 5678.0).

The program also compiles the source data for the quarterly publication *Australian National Accounts: Financial Accounts* (cat. no. 5232.0), which is a component of the Australian national accounts.

A range of tailored aggregations of financial statistics are also undertaken to meet the needs of individual clients.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review and update the conceptual framework of the Venture Capital Survey to ensure that the survey's statistical outputs meet user needs – due September 2006
- in consultation with key users, implement the recommendations of the review of the lending finance publications. In particular, bring forward release dates, enhance content and review frequency of lending finance statistics – due December 2006
- improve the coherence of international and national financial statistics by developing a joint collection of international and domestic financial data from investment fund managers – due December 2006
- refine the financial statistics work program through review of sources and uses of financial statistics, in consultation with key users and providers – due progressively to June 2007
- plan and implement data collection changes consequent to the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM) standards changes in liaison with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority and major statistical users – due progressively from July 2007
- contribute to the finalisation of new international standards for International and National Accounts – the BPM, and the SNA; inform users of the implications of the new standard – due progressively to December 2008.

Public Sector Accounts

Program Manager

Paul McCarthy
Assistant Statistician
Prices Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	2.4
05/06	2.5
06/07	2.3
07/08	2.3
08/09	2.3

Staff usage 2004/05

27 staff years

References

Australian System of Government Finance Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 5514.0).

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 survey.

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 GFS publications each year, compiled in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Government Finance Statistics Manual, 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. Time series spreadsheets for the GFS accruals series for all jurisdictions first became available on the ABS website in April 2005.

Quarterly statistics are compiled to provide general government and public non-financial corporations sector aggregates for input into the Australian national accounts. The quarterly publication, *Government Finance Statistics, Australia, Quarterly, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 5519.0.55.001) 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) which provides initial budget forecasts compiled by each jurisdiction on a GFS basis, *Taxation Revenue, Australia* (cat. no. 5506.0), and *Government Finance Statistics, Education, Australia, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 5518.0.55.001).

An updated and indexed version of *Australian System of Government Finance Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Method* (cat. no. 5514.0) was released on the ABS website in September 2005.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- contribute to, and implement, the harmonisation of GFS and accounting standards for the public sector – the implementation is expected to commence in 2006, following the release of a harmonised standard by the Australian Accounting Standards Board in mid-2006
- seasonally adjust the published quarterly GFS series – first release due December 2007
- release a Quality Strategy for GFS in Australia (public consultation with stakeholders will be part of the process) – release in 2006, with implementation of future directions by 2008
- publish statements of stocks and flows in Australian GFS, giving rise to improved integration and quality of GFS data – first release for the Commonwealth government in 2006, progressively covering all jurisdictions in 2007 and 2008.

Prices

Program Manager

Paul McCarthy
Assistant Statistician
Prices Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	9.7
05/06	10.2
06/07	10.1
07/08	10.1
08/09	10.4

Staff usage 2004/05

131 staff years

References

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

A Guide to the Consumer Price Index: 15th Series (cat. no. 6440.0)

Producer and International Trade Price Indexes: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6429.0)

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

Objectives

The Prices program compiles the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the House Price Indexes (HPI), 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). The program promotes, through 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:

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

The main use of the HPI is:

- a general measure of price changes for established houses and for project homes.

The main uses of the LPI/WPI are:

- a general measure of wage inflation
- a benchmark for national wage cases
- for indexation of business contracts.

The main uses of the PPIs and ITPIs are:

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

Outputs

The main program outputs are quarterly publications:

- *Consumer Price Index, Australia* (cat. no. 6401.0) provides estimates of changes in the prices of goods and services purchased by metropolitan households. *Average Retail Prices of Selected Items, Eight Capital Cities* (cat. no. 6403.0.55.001) is an ancillary publication which presents average retail prices of selected items for the eight Australian capital cities
- *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 changes in the prices of goods and services produced and used by businesses, and *International Trade Price Indexes, Australia* (cat. no. 6457.0) provides estimates of the changes in prices of Australia's exports and imports
- *Labour Price Index, Australia* (cat. no. 6345.0) provides estimates of changes in the average wage and salary costs of a representative mix of employee jobs in the Australian labour market, unaffected by changes in quality and quantity of work performed. The September quarter issue each year contains additional annual estimates.

A range of special data services is available on request.

Developments

The main medium-term developments in the program are to:

- produce an information paper describing work done and future options for producing price indexes for trade margins – due November 2006
- update the weights in the PPIs for materials used in manufacturing industry (MUMI) – due April 2007
- introduce a new index number formula into the PPIs, with equal weighting within the lowest level components – due July 2007
- update ITPIs for the revision to both the Harmonized System and Standard International Trade Classification – due October 2007
- present increasingly complex pricing mechanisms (e.g. 'bundling' prices for groups of services) by extending the use of a 'bills approach' in the CPI – progressively to January 2008
- update the weights in the PPIs by stage of production (SOP), based on 2001–02 Input-Output tables – due January 2008
- expand hedonic price indexes to cover laptops/notebooks (CPI and PPI) – due October 2008
- classify the LPI and the PPIs according to Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANSZIC) 2006 – due February 2009 and October 2009 respectively.

Business Indicators

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Economy Wide
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	3.6
05/06	3.5
06/07	3.0
07/08	3.0
08/09	3.1

Staff usage 2004/05

40 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.

Other key 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 (ATO). These data are essential to ABS business surveys. As such the program has an important role in maintaining the relationship with the ATO, and ensuring that the data are used strategically.

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: cat. nos 8501.0; 5625.0; and 5676.0; present current price data by industry and, where appropriate, estimates are presented 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:

- in conjunction with the ATO, improve the efficiency of procedures associated with the extraction of Business Activity Statement (BAS) data and transfer of these data to the ABS environment – due October 2006
- conduct a review of the program outputs to reassess client needs and identify any data or information gaps, and provide a strategy for dealing with identified issues – due December 2006
- assess the quality and fitness for purpose of BAS data and Business Income Tax data and implement improved validation procedures to ensure ongoing data quality – due December 2006
- investigate the use of 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 May 2006, implementation due March 2007
- review the Retail Trade Survey redesign, implemented in July 2004, to ensure new procedures and methodologies are efficient and effective – due June 2007.

Economy Wide Statistics

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Economy Wide Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.7
05/06	2.4
06/07	1.6
07/08	1.5
08/09	1.4

Staff usage 2004/05

21 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 (with the exception of finance and insurance). 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 industry benchmark 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 within the ABS are the National Accounts Branch and the Business Demographics National Statistics Centre. External clients include Australian and state and territory government agencies, industry organisations, financial analysts and academic institutions.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are the annual publication *Australian Industry* (cat. no. 8155.0) and related data cubes. These outputs provide 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 Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) industry division and subdivision level. Estimates for several of these variables are also presented by broad categories of business size and for non-employed businesses. State/territory estimates for key variables, as well as four-digit ANZSIC industry estimates at the Australian level, are also included, with an experimental status.

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 indicators.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate methods for producing more detailed industry statistics (than would otherwise be available from the Economic Activity Survey) via synthetic estimation and/or modelling techniques – due September 2006
- implement changes to the Economic Activity Survey so that it becomes the core collection of the Annual Integrated Collection (AIC) providing broad industry financial data for the economy on an annual basis – due August 2007
- develop and implement a program of rolling industry specific collections with different frequencies to provide detailed financial data, product detail and activity type data, as well as alternative industry views of various activities – due August 2007
- collect initial data based solely on the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 – due August 2007
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Economic Activity Survey, including:
 - increased use of the ABS' economic data management and storage facility, the Information Data Warehouse – due August 2007
 - adoption of the standardised survey infrastructure of ABS Survey Facilities – due August 2007.

Business Demographics

Program Manager

Steve Crabb
Assistant Statistician
Integration, Coordination
and Innovation Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.3
05/06	2.1
06/07	4.2
07/08	4.3
08/09	3.3

Staff usage 2004/05

46 staff years

Objectives

The Business Demographics program is responsible for the provision of a range of information about the structure, characteristics and performance of the economy and conceptual developments regarding business definitions and classifications. This information is part of a consistent framework for all ABS business statistics and includes the development of an Integrated Business Characteristics Strategy. A particular but not exclusive focus of the program is on providing information about small businesses.

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.

Outputs

The main ongoing output from the program is the annual publication, *Characteristics of Small Business, Australia* (cat. no. 8127.0), released in April each year.

The program released an experimental series on Business Entries and Exits in 2005 and this will be merged with a series on business counts. The merged publication is due for release in July 2006. As part of this process, the program released an Information Paper, *A Statistical View of Counts of Businesses in Australia, 2005* (cat. no. 8162.0) in October 2005.

In addition to the 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 (CURF) was also released in 1999 which contains data included in the survey for the reference years 1994–95 to 1997–98. Similar output will be released from the BLD, commencing in December 2006.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- commence publication of an annual business entries and exits and business counts series – due July 2006
- develop and produce a web theme page containing a range of business demographic statistics – due July 2006
- commence analysis of the respective financial performance of entries, exits and continuing businesses – first results due late 2006
- develop the BLD using a combination of directly collected ABS survey data and administrative data from a range of sources, including the Australian Tax Office – first CURF due December 2006 and annually thereafter
- develop analytical thematic outputs from the BLD – first outputs due December 2006 and on a regular basis thereafter
- more detailed information on entries, exits and continuing businesses to be produced – ongoing from 2007.

Innovation and Technology

Program Manager

Steve Crabb
Assistant Statistician
Integration, Coordination
and Innovation Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05 2.7

05/06 2.2

06/07 1.9

07/08 2.0

08/09 2.5

Staff usage 2004/05

32 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, Innovation,
Science & 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. It provides measures of the penetration of selected new technologies, particularly information and communication technology (ICT), within Australia. The program maintains the Innovation Technical Reference Group (established 2003) and the Information and Communication Technology Reference Group (established early 2004). Plans are in place to establish a Research and Development User Reference Group in 2006.

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, Productivity Commission
- state/territory government departments
- industry associations, research organisations, universities and businesses.

Outputs

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

- production of, and trade in, ICT goods and services within the Australian economy
- use of ICT 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 non-profit organisations
- biotechnology activity undertaken within the Australian economy
- human resources with selected qualifications and in selected occupations (related to ICT).

The program provides input into the development of the ICT account in Australian national accounts.

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

The program 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. 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:

- progress the principles of integration for the collection of innovation, use of information technology and other characteristics from the Integrated Business Characteristics Survey (IBCS) vehicle – this will occur during 2006
- publish results from the 2004 survey of Research and Experimental Development for the Higher Education sector – due May 2006
- update the information development plan for Innovation and Information and Communication Technology Statistics information development plan – due July 2006
- publish results from the 2004–05 survey of Research and Experimental Development for the Business sector – due August 2006.
- publish results from the 2004–05 surveys of Research and Experimental Development for the Government and Private Nonprofit sectors – due August 2006
- publish results from the 2004–05 Information and Communication Technology Industry Survey – due September 2006
- publish results from the survey of Innovation in Australian Business in respect of 2005 – due December 2006
- publish Household Use of Information Technology results from the 2005–06 Multi-purpose Household Survey and Children's Participation in Culture and Leisure Activities (CPCLA) Survey – due December 2006
- progress the principles of integration for the collection of innovation, use of information technology and other characteristics from the Integrated Business Characteristics Survey (IBCS) vehicle – ongoing throughout 2006
- publish data from the 2005–06 Business Use of Information Technology module – late 2007
- in consultation with users, determine their analytical requirements from data contained in the Business Longitudinal Database for the areas of innovation, use of information technology and other characteristics – ongoing until December 2007
- publish data from the 2006–07 Innovation module – mid 2008
- define the ICT industry in terms of Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZIC) 2006 and publish results from the 2006–07 Information and Communication Technology Industry Survey – due August 2008.

Agriculture

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Industry and Environment
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	2.4
05/06	2.9
06/07	3.0
07/08	1.8
08/09	1.8

Staff usage 2004/05

31 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.

Australian government agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the state Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources use agriculture data for formulating and monitoring policies in respect to the various activities undertaken within the agriculture industry, and for the managing 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 Delivery* (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 agricultural irrigation water use and management is available annually in *Water use on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4618.0).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop a strategy for agriculture surveys from 2006–07 onwards – due March 2007
- implement strategies identified through the Agriculture information development plan – due June 2007
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 – due June 2007
- implement coding of 2006 Agricultural Census farms to mesh block level – due October 2007
- provide output at regional levels from the 2006 Agricultural Census – due February 2008.

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Industry and Environment
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	0.3
05/06	0.3
06/07	0.05
07/08	0.05
08/09	0.05

Staff usage 2004/05

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 industry (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, 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:

- finalise an information development plan for the mining industry – due September 2006
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Mining and Utilities Surveys, including adoption of the use of the ABS' economic data management and storage facility, the Information Data Warehouse, and the ABSest imputation and estimation systems – due October 2006
- further investigate non-ABS data sources for supplementing, or substituting, directly collected data, or for use in data quality assurance and the preparation of articles – due December 2006
- update the sources of mining, electricity, gas and water statistics – due April 2007
- develop mining sustainability indicators – due June 2007
- collect initial data based solely on the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 – due August 2007
- publish data on a framework that enables more consistent reporting of commodity production and value data supplied by the state and territory departments responsible for mining – due September 2007
- publish data based on the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 – due September 2008.

Manufacturing

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Industry and Environment
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	2.3
05/06	1.8
06/07	0.9
07/08	0.9
08/09	0.9

Staff usage 2004/05

28 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then
Manufacturing Statistics

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. 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:

- finalise an information development plan for the manufacturing industry – due October 2006
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Manufacturing Survey, including adoption of the use of the ABS' economic data management and storage facility, and Information Data Warehouse – due October 2006
- collect initial data based solely on the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 – due August 2007
- publish data based on the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 – due September 2008.

Construction

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Industry and Environment
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	2.3
05/06	1.8
06/07	0.9
07/08	0.9
08/09	0.8

Staff usage 2004/05

34 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 Statistics User Advisory Group – due December 2006
- 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 2007
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Construction collections, including adoption of the use of the ABS' economic data management and storage facility, the Information Data Warehouse and the ABSest imputation and estimation systems as appropriate for:
 - Engineering Construction Survey – due March 2007
 - Building Activity Survey – due December 2007
- plan for the introduction of the revised industry classification system ANZSIC 2006 – due December 2007
- investigate the demand, feasibility and implications of conducting a Construction Industry Survey – due February 2008.

Transport

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Industry and Environment
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.4
05/06	1.3
06/07	1.8
07/08	1.8
08/09	1.8

Staff usage 2004/05

20 staff years

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; the 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 Delivery* (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.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate interest in a Transport Statistics User Group discussion – due December 2006
- investigate the development of a Transport Statistics Information Development Plan in cooperation with the National Transport Data Framework – due December 2006
- implement the recommendations from the SMVU Fit for Purpose Review which are designed to fine tune the survey methodology and collection instrument to better meet uses needs – due February 2007
- adopt new technologies for the processing and management of the Transport Surveys, including adoption of the full suite of contemporary corporate systems – due April 2007
- improve ABS understanding of freight logistics statistics – due June 2007.

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Transport

Service Industries

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Industry and Environment
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05 2.7

05/06 2.6

06/07 2.3

07/08 4.5

08/09 6.8

Staff usage 2004/05

32 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 outputs, including publications and special data services, each year for selected service industries. These outputs provide information on activities, income, expenses, operating profit before tax, employment and other key statistics for the industries under study.

Outputs for the 2003–04 reference year included public libraries, museums, accommodation, cafes and restaurants and travel agency services.

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

Outputs for the 2005–06 reference year will cover the retail and wholesale industries.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- better engage with key clients at multiple levels to establish mutual understanding of our clients' strategic priorities and ABS priority setting processes, and the use of statistical data in decision making – ongoing but with a measurable improvement in our relationships by December 2006
- review the service industries survey program, with particular areas of consideration being community services and cultural activities, as part of a broader review of annual industry collection requirements – due April 2007
- investigate the implications of conducting a Transport Industry Survey (or elements thereof) – due April 2007
- examine the possibilities of using alternative industry views to address priority requirement such as the Government's action agenda program – due June 2007
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Service Industries surveys, including adoption of the full suite of contemporary corporate systems – due October 2007.

Tourism

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Industry and Environment
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	0.6
05/06	0.3
06/07	0.7
07/08	0.7
08/09	0.6

Staff usage 2004/05

7 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. Data include the Australian Tourism Satellite Account, overseas arrivals and departures, tourism related exports and imports indicators, Survey of Tourist Accommodation 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 has expanded the survey to include smaller establishments and other accommodation types for the reference periods March quarter 2005 to December quarter 2008.

The program works with National Accounts to produce the *Tourism Satellite Account* (cat. no. 5249.0). The production of the account is funded by Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources as part of the Tourism White Paper.

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, Electronic Delivery* (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:

- finalise investigations into the development of a tourism investment indicator – due July 2006
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Survey of Tourism Accommodation, including adoption of the full suite of contemporary corporate systems – due September 2006
- 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 2006
- in partnership with Tourism Australia and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, explore tourism statistics, definitions and classifications, and contribute to the evaluation of the Tourism White Paper – due February 2007
- contribute to the UN World Tourism Organisation and other international bodies as they examine statistical definitions and classifications – due June 2008.

Environment and Energy

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Industry and Environment
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05 1.4

05/06 2.3

06/07 1.6

07/08 2.3

08/09 1.9

Staff usage 2004/05

16 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Environment and Energy,
then Environment

Objectives

The Environment and Energy program provides a focal point for the ABS to meet the growing need for environment and energy information by integrating environmental, economic and social data.

To guide the activities of the ABS environment program an advisory board, consisting of Commonwealth and State government representatives, has been established.

Clients of the program include:

- Commonwealth Departments of: Environment and Heritage; Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; and Industry, Tourism and Resources
- government agencies such as Bureau of Rural Sciences, Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Research Economics; the National Land and Water Resources Audit; and the National Water Commission
- state/territory government departments with environment or energy responsibilities
- academic institutions, environmental groups, research organisations, businesses and individuals.

The use of environment and energy data are varied and include the formulation of policies, preparing briefing material, economic analysis, research and forecasting – all of which assist in the management of the nation's environmental and natural resources (including minerals). Data from the area is also widely disseminated via a newsletter and the website and has been used in the community to inform debates. Much of the programs data are picked up by the media.

Outputs

The outputs of the Environment and Energy Program are many and varied, and range from generalist compendia and thematic publications to specialised topic specific publications and research papers. The main outputs can be summarised as:

- environmental accounts that 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. More recently the account work has focussed on producing a better *Water Account Australia* (cat. no. 4610.0), and developing energy and greenhouse gas accounts
- a biennial Natural Resources Management on Australian Farms Survey (cat. no. 4620.0). Outputs will become available from 2006–07 as a result of increased funding from the 2005 Federal Budget. This work will build on a Land Management and Salinity Survey conducted in May 2002 as a supplement to the 2001 Agricultural Census and published in *Salinity on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4615.0)
- agricultural water and use and management information in *Water Use on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4618.0)
- household attitude and behaviour statistics which provide information on people's concern, attitudes and behaviour relating to water, energy, transport and waste issues, published in *Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices* (cat. no. 4602.0)
- environmental aspects of thematic publications such as *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0), which aims to present summary indicators of whether life in Australia is getting better
- research-based outputs resulting from experimental projects, such as *Land Management: Fitzroy and Livingstone Shires Queensland* (cat. no. 4651.0), showing the development of the land parcel methodology to allow for more flexible spatial outputs.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- finalise the development of the Natural Resource Management (NRM) Survey and establish the ongoing NRM program for the publication *National Resource Management on Australian Farms 2004–05* (cat. no. 4620.0) – due August 2006
- redevelop the Environmental Household survey program – due October 2006
- develop a new edition of *Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends* (cat. no. 4613.0) – due December 2006
- produce an expanded *Water Account Australia* (cat. no. 4610.0) in respect of 2004–05, which aims to provide greater regional, more industry detail and economic data on the water supply industry – due May 2007
- investigate processes for the ongoing collection land statistics – due June 2007
- investigate methods for producing geographical and spatial data, including for targeted regions of interest – due June 2007
- work with Commonwealth Government agencies, and especially the Department of Environment and Heritage and the National Water Commission, to establish Environment and Energy information priorities and ways these may be able to be met by the ABS and others – ongoing.

Economic Statistics Standards

Program Manager

Steve Crabb
Assistant Statistician
Integration, Coordination
and Innovation Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.6
05/06	1.7
06/07	1.3
07/08	1.2
08/09	1.2

Staff usage 2004/05

18 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

At www.abs.gov.au select Methods, Classifications, Concepts & Standards on the horizontal navigation bar

Objectives

The Economic Statistics Standards program is responsible for the development and integration of the 'conceptual infrastructure' of economic statistics, including industry, sector and product classifications; associated products such as coders, algorithms and correspondences; units models; standard questions and metadata definitions for economic collections; and strategic developments relating to the ABS business register. The 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 infrastructure facilitates, as far as possible, the comparability of Australian statistics with international statistics.

A key objective is the adoption, by other government and private organisations, of the statistical standards developed by the ABS. To support this objective, the program provides substantial advice and/or training to many of these organisations. A major theme of the program's activity is the co-operative work with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to ensure that Australian Business Register (ABR) data, which are used as the basis of much of the ABS business register, are suitable as inputs to business survey frames.

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 (CPC) 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 in the production of economic statistics.

Outputs

Outputs include: revised standards reflecting, amongst other things, changes to economic circumstances, business practices, legislation and international standards; publications and 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 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, question wording and metadata definition 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, in particular, application of classifications. In addition, the ABS supports the ATO in developing and implementing a strategy for maintaining the quality of the ABR.

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- contribute to better integrated metadata management for economic statistics – due December 2006
- contribute to the development of methodologies and concepts for developing significant alternative views of industry that cut across standard activity and commodity classifications – due December 2006
- assess the impact of changes to Australian Accounting Standards and amend standard ABS question wording as necessary – ongoing through to 2007
- follow up the development of ANZSIC 2006 with user support and training – ongoing through to 2007
- contribute to the redevelopment of the International Central Product Classification – ongoing through to 2007
- investigate the feasibility of redeveloping the Australian and New Zealand Standard Product Classification (ANZSPC) to align with the Central Product Classification (Rev. 2) – ongoing through to 2007
- subject to the above study, redevelop the ANZSPC with the aim of incorporating the various ABS product classifications within it – ongoing through to 2008
- 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 ABR – progressively to 2009
- continue reviewing the ABS units model in the context of changes to the ABS business register, including changes in the scope of the business register with the use of ABR data and impact of those changes on survey frames – ongoing through to 2009
- co-ordinate technical and methodological advice to the ATO regarding the ABR maintenance strategy – ongoing.

POPULATION STATISTICS GROUP

Demography

Program Manager

Garth Bode
Assistant Statistician
Labour and Demography
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	3.2
05/06	3.9
06/07	3.4
07/08	3.3
08/09	3.3

Staff usage 2004/05

44 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: Australian and state electoral commissions; Australian, state and territory treasuries; and Commonwealth, state and 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, 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.

Other major publications include: *Births, Australia* (cat. no. 3301.0); *Deaths, Australia* (cat. no. 3302.0); *Migration, Australia* (cat. no. 3412.0); *Regional Population Growth, Australia* (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 is available on the ABS web site in *Australian Historical Population Statistics, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- release state and territory demographic summary indicators in electronic format to accompany national releases – due progressively to December 2006
- investigate alternative data sources and methods for determining intercensal interstate migration – due December 2006
- develop, conduct and process the 2006 Census Post-enumeration Survey – due early 2007
- in conjunction with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, participate in a review of data sources and statistical methods used in measuring international movements and migration – due June 2007
- implement improved methods for estimating net overseas migration – due June 2007
- review business practices and processes for acquiring and processing administrative data on births and deaths – due July 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
- implement response to the review of processes and sources for deriving estimated resident population – ongoing
- implement quality improvement program for processing administrative data on births and deaths – ongoing
- 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 data to the ABS – ongoing.

Program Manager

Garth Bode
Assistant Statistician
Labour and Demography
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	5.6
05/06	5.9
06/07	6.8
07/08	6.0
08/09	6.2

Staff usage 2004/05

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, employment conditions 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 Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 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 is 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:

- develop and implement improved methods for families estimates from the Labour Force Survey – due late 2006
- develop and conduct the Survey of Child Employment – due early 2007
- implement composite estimation in the Labour Force Survey – due mid 2007
- develop, select and implement a new sample for the Monthly Population Survey – due end 2007
- continue reviewing information needs and methodologies to monitor skills shortages – progressively to 2007
- develop issues-based information development plans covering a range of current labour market issues – due progressively to 2007
- undertake further development of measures of labour underutilisation by producing quarterly series and by including additional population groups – due progressively to 2007
- implement changes to the survey program resulting from the review of statistics of working arrangements – due progressively to 2008
- implement new population benchmarks for the Labour Force Survey and make historical revisions to series, based on revised population estimates following the 2006 Census – due end 2008
- implement revised Industry and Occupation classifications (*Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification* and *Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations*) in the Labour Force Survey, and undertake backcasting – due progressively to 2008
- implement changes to statistical series resulting from the revised conceptual framework for statistics of employee remuneration – due progressively to 2008.

Program Manager

Sally Goodspeed
Assistant Statistician
Indigenous and Health
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.7
05/06	1.9
06/07	1.5
07/08	1.5
08/09	1.6

Staff usage 2003/04

24 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 of Australia's population, and about health related services. This includes statistics relating to the health status, mortality, disability, risk factors and other aspects of the population.

Statistics on health and disability describe an important aspect of wellbeing, which can impact on people's capacity to participate in the labour force, and more broadly in the community. Changes in the levels of health measures, such as health conditions, risk factors, and disability, can inform both the development of interventions for prevention and care, and the need for related services over time. These statistics support the policy development, program delivery and evaluation of key government and non-government agencies involved in health, community and family services. They provide information on the 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 Departments of: Health and Ageing; the Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; 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, 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 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 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 hospitals (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:

- finalise the review of ABS health survey program, and commence development of the 2007–08 National Health Survey – from mid 2006
- release results from the 'disability – need for assistance' module in the 2006 Census – late 2007
- conduct the 2007 Survey of Mental Health and Well being – results from late 2008
- disseminate further results and analysis from the 2004–5 National Health Survey – ongoing
- support ongoing efforts to harmonise State/Territory health surveys that use computer assisted telephone interviews – ongoing
- statistical leadership to address data gaps, including through the development of new collections and improving analysis of mortality data – ongoing.

Education and Training

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	2.9
05/06	1.3
06/07	1.8
07/08	1.4
08/09	1.3

Staff usage 2004/05

15 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 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 receives advice 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, Electronic Delivery* (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, Electronic Delivery* (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 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 May 2006
- conduct the annual Survey of Education and Work – due 2006
- implement the priority actions identified in the first three-yearly review of the *Measuring Learning in Australia – Plan to Improve the Quality, Coverage and Use of Education and Training Statistics* (cat. no. 4231.0) – commence late 2006
- undertake a review of the Surveys of Education and Training, and Education and Work in readiness for the 2009 enumeration of both surveys – due June 2007
- develop and conduct the Survey of Adult Literacy and Life Skills – due mid 2007
- 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, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 4232.0.55.001), undertake comparisons with the major sectoral collections, and assess the need for development of new standards for other variables – ongoing.

Crime and Justice

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.7
05/06	1.6
06/07	2.6
07/08	2.5
08/09	2.5

Staff usage 2004/05

21 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Crime and
Justice

Objectives

The Crime and Justice Statistics program leads national statistical activity relating to the crime and justice aimed at developing and improving the information available in this field. An important output released in 2005 was the *Information Paper: National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice (NIDP)* (cat. no. 4520.0). This represented the results of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and presented 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) comprises three independent user-funded statistical units: 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. A Board of Management oversees the work of each of the units. Board Members include jurisdictional representatives responsible for police services, courts administration and corrective services.

An additional component of the NCCJS work program is aimed at progressing broader crime and justice statistical issues identified within the NIDP and this work is progressed through discrete ABS funding.

The ABS also oversees a survey program in the field of crime and justice statistics. Data from the 2005 Personal Safety Survey (PSS) and the 2005 National Crime and Safety Survey (NCSS) will be released in 2006–07. The 2005 PSS will enable comparisons to be made about women using results from the 1996 Women's Safety Survey, as well as, for the first time, producing similar information for men. The release of results from the 2005 NCSS will provide users with updated results for comparison with the 2002 NCSS. The ABS is also working jointly with other agencies collecting crime information through significant national surveys to review the national program of surveys.

The main clients of this 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:

- *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
- *Crime and Safety, Australia* (cat. no. 4509.0) published three-yearly
- *Personal Safety Survey* (cat. no. 4509.0) published irregularly
- *National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice Statistics* (cat. no. 4906.0) published irregularly
- 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
- 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:

- produce and promote outputs from the 2005 National Crime and Safety Survey (released April 2006) and 2005 Personal Safety Survey – due July 2006
- provide an evaluation of the feasibility of producing experimental Recorded Crime Offender Based statistics which will include details of persons (10 years and over) who come to the attention of police and the resultant actions – due December 2006
- progress the development of a national Children's Criminal Courts dataset and review future needs in this area – due mid-2007
- update and promote standard concepts, definitions, classifications, rules and procedures through a review of the Australian Standard of Offence Classification – due late 2007
- implement the priority actions identified for the ABS to progress in the *Information Paper: National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice (NIDP)* (cat. no. 4520.0) – due 2008.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics

Program Manager

Sally Goodspeed
Assistant Statistician
Indigenous and Health
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05 3.9

05/06 3.4

06/07 2.6

07/08 2.6

08/09 2.6

Staff usage 2004/05

20 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. This includes 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 continued 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 such as *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey* (cat. no. 4715.0) and *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* (cat. no. 4714.0). Statistical outputs are also available as special tabulations, and through access to Confidentialised Unit Record Files released through the ABS Remote Access Data Laboratory or in more detail for analysis on-site
- publications and other products from the Census of Population and Housing, such as *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians* (cat. no. 4713.0), and from user funded surveys, such as *Housing and Infrastructure in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities* (cat. no. 4710.0) from the Community Infrastructure Needs Survey
- 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
- provision of 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:

- develop the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) – commencing July 2006
- develop and conduct a Community Infrastructure Needs Survey in 2006 on behalf of the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs – due February 2007
- publish statistics about the characteristics and distribution of Indigenous people from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing – from mid 2007
- improve, and report on, the quality of Indigenous status information in key administrative sources – ongoing
- continue to strengthen 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 work on Indigenous statistics in the broader ABS work program including the updating of Indigenous population estimates, projections and life expectancy, using data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing – 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

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	0.8
05/06	1.3
06/07	1.1
07/08	1.0
08/09	1.0

Staff usage 2004/05

10 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Economic
Wellbeing of Households

Other references

*Household Expenditure
Survey and Survey of
Income and Housing,
Australia, 2003–04: User
Guide* (cat. no. 6503.0)

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 economic 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 Departments of: Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Health and Ageing; Employment and Workplace Relations; the Treasury; 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 derived from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) and the Survey of Income and Housing (SIH), 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). Additional information is provided in *Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia* (cat. no. 4130.0.55.001) and *Household Wealth and Wealth Distribution in Australia, Australia* (cat. no. 6554.0).

Data from the HES, Input-Output tables and public sector financial accounts are brought together to estimate the incidence of government benefits and taxes for various population groups – results are published in *Government Benefits, Taxes and Household Income, Australia* (cat. no. 6537.0).

Information about the superannuation of Australians derived from the Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation is 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:

- undertake and publish a fiscal incidence study (the allocation of taxes and government benefits to households) based on data from the 2003–04 Household Expenditure Survey – due December 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 December 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
- compile and publish results from the 2005–06 Survey of Income and Housing – due April 2007
- work with stakeholders to complete an information development plan for housing statistics – due May 2007
- develop and publish superannuation related components of the 2007 Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation – due January 2008
- develop, conduct and publish results from the 2007–08 Survey of Income and Housing – due April 2009.

Family and Community

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	0.9
05/06	0.4
06/07	0.7
07/08	0.7
08/09	0.7

Staff usage 2004/05

10 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 families, 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 Departments of: Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Health and Ageing; Employment and Workplace Relations; and the Treasury, 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. Key publications include:

- *General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia* (cat. no. 4159.0) which 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
- *Information Paper: Measuring Social Capital – An Australian Framework and Indicators* (cat. no. 1378.0) providing 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, including their unpaid household and community work, derived from time use surveys and published in *How Australians Use Their Time* (cat. no. 4153.0) and *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy* (cat. no. 5240.0.0)
- information about volunteering from voluntary work surveys, published in *Voluntary Work, Australia* (cat. no. 4441.0)
- information about families and their circumstances, available on a recurrent basis from many sources including the Census of Population and Housing, the Labour Force survey, and specialised publications such as *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:

- support the dissemination of results from ABS collections containing family and community data items with a large focus on newly available data – (Pregnancy and Work Transitions, 2006 General Social Survey with new data relating to social capital and voluntary work, 2006 Time Use Survey, and the Family Characteristics and Family Transitions and History Surveys – ongoing from August 2006 to early 2008)
- develop, in consultation with key stakeholders, a family statistics framework to support ongoing data development activities – due August 2007
- evaluate the viability of using an interview (rather than a diary) based data collection method in an abbreviated instrument to provide updates of broad time use patterns on a more frequent basis – due November 2007
- evaluate emerging data needs and the implications for the ABS collections that have a particular focus on family and community issues – Child Care Survey in 2008, and the General Social Survey in 2010
- undertake an analysis of the relationship of social capital items with each other and against indicators of wellbeing – due March 2008
- support ongoing national and international efforts to develop standard approaches to measuring family and community related data items including family types, unpaid work (and voluntary work in particular) and community strength related indicators – ongoing.

Culture and Recreation

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	0.7
05/06	0.8
06/07	0.9
07/08	0.9
08/09	0.9

Staff usage 2004/05

8 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, the Sport and Recreation Ministers' Council, Australian government agencies (including the sport and culture areas of the Departments of: Communications, Information Technology and the Arts; Immigration and Multicultural Affairs; and 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 a data directory for culture and leisure statistics 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
- compendium 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:

- initiate projects to explore the potential for non-ABS data sources to be used to improve the national statistical service (eg, data from major cultural institutions; use of Economic Activity Survey/Tax data for culture and leisure industries; and use of government administrative data sources for migrants) – commence 2006
- review the Australian Culture and Leisure Classifications, taking into account changes to standard industry and occupation classifications – commence 2006
- establish governance arrangements, and priorities for a new unit to address identified data needs relating to migrants and ethnicity – due mid 2006
- progress the development of an IDP for cultural heritage and arts – due end 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 leading the development of relevant standards (eg, a conceptual model for defining sport and physical activity, standards for measuring visa category) – ongoing
- improve the dissemination of information through the theme page on the ABS web site, and other appropriate avenues, such as through client networks, conferences, seminars and workshops – ongoing.

Rural and Regional

Program Manager

Mike McGrath
Regional Director
South Australian Office

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.1
05/06	1.2
06/07	0.5
07/08	0.5
08/09	0.5

Staff usage 2004/05

14 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Regional

Objectives

The Rural and Regional Statistics program aims to improve the availability of regional data. Activities undertaken under the program include improving access to, and dissemination of ABS data and data from other sources, and developing new indicators where feasible. A particular focus of this work is on utilising administrative data maintained by Australian Government and state/territory government agencies, where data have a location identifier with the potential to be used in presenting data geographically. The activities of the Rural and Regional Statistics Program are undertaken by the Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre and by Regional Statistics Units (RSUs) in each ABS state and territory office.

The activities of the Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre are nationally focused. Its role is to provide leadership, and coordinate, produce and disseminate statistics that will assist policy analysts and researchers understand 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 regions including Local Government Areas and other areas included in the Main Structure of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification. The NRP contains data spanning five years and is updated annually
- a Rural and Regional Statistics Information Development Plan, released in January 2006
- standard and customised regional profiles
- Perspectives on Regional Australia – a series of reports analysing, at varying geographic levels, a range of topics with a particular focus on regional Australia
- experimental estimates and indicators from administrative data, such as the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) personal and business income tax data, and Centrelink 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:
 - Version 3, containing state/territory specific information – due 2006
 - Version 4 – due 2007
- implement the recommendations from the Rural and Regional Statistics Information Development Plan – ongoing to 2008
- increase the availability of regional statistics, using the mesh block/address coder developments to support the geographic classification of administrative data sets, and access to high priority data sets – ongoing
- continue the development and provision of indicators in support of major state/territory government initiatives such as 'Tasmania Together', the 'South Australia Strategic Plan' and the 'Victorian Community Indicators Project' – ongoing
- account manage the local government sector with regard to their small area information needs – ongoing.

Program Manager

Malcolm Greig
Acting Regional Director
Queensland Office

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	0.3
05/06	0.3
06/07	0.3
07/08	0.3
08/09	0.3

Staff usage 2004/05

3 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 Departments of: Health and Ageing; Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Employment and Workplace Relations; and Treasury, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) and state/territory departments responsible for issues relating to older persons, 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 concepts and definitions within a statistical framework for ageing
- 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
- 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:

- conduct a review into the ageing component of the Household Survey Program to increase the quality of ageing statistics – due 2006
- finalise development of the IDP for ageing – due end 2006
- provide leadership in the implementation of data development activities identified within the IDP for ageing – ongoing throughout 2007
- undertake analytical projects related to ageing – 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; undertake analytical work collaboratively 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)

04/05 0.2

05/06 0.2

06/07 0.2

07/08 0.2

08/09 0.2

Staff usage 2004/05

4 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 being progressed through the development of an Information Development Plan for children and youth. The Unit maintains an awareness 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. The NCYSU is participating in several advisory groups for a range of projects including Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing's *Australia's Youth, their Health and Wellbeing* (due for release in 2007) and the *National Headline Indicators* project (a sub-project of the Child Health and Wellbeing initiative approved by AHMC and CDSMC in 2005, initial report due for completion in July 2006).

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 improving and strengthening 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:

- finalise the Children and Youth Information Development Plan, a comprehensive plan of action to improve statistics in the field, including working with agencies to develop responses to unmet information needs, and collaboration with those agencies and other areas of the ABS in undertaking this work – due June 2006
- 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
- encourage custodians of data on children and/or youth to join the National Data Network either through hosting an individual node or sharing a node – ongoing
- provide leadership to those developing statistical collections or outputs – ongoing.

Social Analysis and Reporting

Program Manager

Barbara Dunlop
First Assistant Statistician
Social and Labour
Statistics Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.2
05/06	1.2
06/07	1.3
07/08	1.3
08/09	1.3

Staff usage 2004/05

12 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), a biennial publication, and *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001), an annual electronic 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.

Seminars based on *Australian Social Trends* (cat. no. 4102.0) and *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0) 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* (cat. no. 4102.0), ensuring that the articles and social indicators reflect current and emerging social concerns – ongoing
- publish *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0) biennially (next release will be in 2008), and *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001) annually – ongoing
- present seminars on *Australian Social Trends* (cat. no. 4102.0) and *Measures of Australia's Progress* (1370.0) in alternate years – ongoing.

Population Statistics Standards

Program Manager

Ian Brodie-Reed
Assistant Statistician
Population Statistics
Infrastructure Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	1.3
05/06	1.4
06/07	1.5
07/08	1.2
08/09	1.1

Staff usage 2004–05

17 staff years

References

At www.abs.gov.au, select Methods, Classifications, Concepts & Standards on the horizontal navigation bar

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 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 and territory 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 (ANZSCO); 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:

- promote the use of ABS and Australian standards and classifications by providing expert advice in the production of a range of national Data Dictionaries, including: National Health Data Dictionary and National Community Services Data Dictionary – due June 2006
- develop a suite of statistical standards for disability and the need for assistance – due late 2006
- contribute to the use of standards and classifications by expanding the metadata contained in each standard – due 2006
- contribute to the redevelopment of the International Standard Classification of Occupations – due 2007
- assist in the development of 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 and a expanded range of standards in household surveys – due 2008
- plan and coordinate the implementation of ANZSCO in ABS statistics and external data collection activities – progressively to 2009
- produce enhanced indexes to increase match rates and quality for automatic and computer assisted coding the 2006 Census and Household Surveys – ongoing

OTHER KEY PROGRAMS

Census of Population and Housing

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Census and
Geography Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	14.3
05/06	55.5
06/07	123.6
07/08	20.7
08/09	12.3

Staff usage 2004/05

108 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 Community Profiles 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, community profiles and other selected census data are available, free of charge, 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) and *Information Paper: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Proposed Products and Services* (cat no. 2011.0). These publications are available free of charge from the ABS web site.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- commence release of 2001 Census data using 2006 Census output systems – due July 2006
- conduct 2006 Census – Census night – Tuesday 8 August 2006
- develop strategic directions for 2011 Census – due December 2006
- complete development of 2006 Census output systems – due February 2007
- first release data from 2006 Census – due July 2007
- complete 2006 Census processing – due August 2007
- second release data from 2006 Census – due November 2007
- determine collection strategy for 2011 Census – due December 2007
- release Socio-economic indicators for areas (SEIFA) – due March 2008
- release 2006 Census publications – due June 2008
- commence user consultation on nature and content of 2011 Census – due June 2008.

Geography

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Census and
Geography Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05 2.6

05/06 2.5

06/07 1.2

07/08 1.2

08/09 1.2

Staff usage 2004/05

24 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) - Electronic Structures, Electronic Delivery* (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, Electronic Delivery* (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
- advice and support services to meet the mapping, address coding, GIS, geographical classification and spatial data management needs of the ABS.

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.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- 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
- develop systems and procedures for 2011 Census mapping – due December 2007
- review ASGC and other geographic classifications – due December 2008
- promote the use of a Geocoded National Address File and mesh block level coding to other agencies – ongoing
- 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 and GIS within the ABS – ongoing
- produce annual editions of the ASGC and updates to the National Locality Index – ongoing.

Analytical Services

Program Manager

Marion McEwin
Assistant Statistician
Analytical Services
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	2.7
05/06	2.7
06/07	2.9
07/08	2.8
08/09	2.8

Staff usage 2004/05

39 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, and the Departments of: Families and Community Services; Health and Ageing; 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) 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:

- explore options and methods for improving indicators of participation, retention and progression through secondary education – due September 2006
- develop a methodology for improving estimates of average annual hours worked for use in productivity estimates – due December 2006
- develop expertise in methods of linking data, methods of evaluating the quality of the linking, and using software to implement these – due December 2006
- explore use of modelling techniques to synthesise data in those years when industry surveys are not conducted – due March 2007
- develop a method for forming the Statistical Longitudinal Census Data Set and a method for evaluating the linkage over time – due December 2007
- 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.

State and Territory Statistical Services

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05 7.8

05/06 7.2

06/07 7.0

07/08 7.0

08/09 7.0

Staff usage 2004/05

100 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 (NSS) 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 NSS, increased availability of good quality state and territory and regional data from ABS and non-ABS sources that meet high priority state and territory statistical needs, as far as possible within national standards and frameworks
- as a component of the NSS, 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
- a coordinated key issues paper for discussion at the State Statistical Forum
- 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 project are to:

- undertake the development and processing of state and territory household surveys, or alternative statistical projects, and general outputs – annually
- 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.

SERVICES GROUP

Corporate Services

Program Manager

Julia Burns
First Assistant Statistician
Corporate Services

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	15.9
05/06	18.2
06/07	11.4
07/08	11.5
08/09	11.5

Staff usage 2004/05

142 staff years

Objectives

Corporate Services Division (CSD) provides a range of services to support the ABS and its employees in the achievement of business objectives. Some require direct delivery of services, others involve a support and coordination role. Within an environment of continuous improvement, CSD:

- partners with other areas in the ABS in seeking opportunities to drive productivity improvements
- provides leadership in driving required cultural and behavioural change
- ensures that the ABS has a workforce capable of delivering on its work program commitments
- provides comprehensive, timely and cost-effective people and financial management services, while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and government directions
- ensures a fair, diverse, safe and healthy work environment for all employees
- drives appropriate management of financial resources and physical assets within the ABS
- provides accurate and timely reporting on the ABS' financial position .

While services are provided to all ABS employees, support, guidance, coordination and liaison roles are provided to managers, cost centres and governance bodies. Externally, CSD engages with relevant Commonwealth agencies for governance and audit purposes.

Outputs

Outputs for CSD fall into two categories: services that are delivered to ABS employees; and policy advice, framework development and internal consultancy roles. Services are provided through three organisational groups: Financial Management; Business Strategies Branch; and Business Operations Branch. Each operates on a national basis, offering services across all offices.

In particular, CSD delivers:

- maintenance and development of corporate support systems
- workforce capability development, recruitment processing and selection process support
- strategic frameworks for a range of Human Resource (HR) initiatives
- development and administration of employment agreements
- people management services and support
- pay and entitlements processing
- occupational health and safety (OHS) policy, advisory and case management
- management of building and physical environment issues
- external and internal reporting on the ABS' financial position, accounts payable, revenue reporting and receivable services
- education and advice on appropriate management of financial resources and accounting policies and procedures
- material and responses that comply with external reporting requirements.

Developments

The main medium term developments are to :

- identify and pursue strategies that deliver improved and efficient corporate services to the ABS – ongoing through to 2007
- identify the "shape" of the required ABS workforce in the medium and longer term followed by prioritisation, development and implementation of the strategies required to create the desired workforce profile – development due 2007, then ongoing
- implement Injury Prevention & Management strategies and initiatives in line with the ABS OHS Management System – due 2007
- improve the timeliness and consistency of financial reporting and forecasting – due 2007
- increase awareness and use of the performance management system as a way to improve performance – ongoing through to 2007
- refinement of the Organisational People and Learning System as a basis to identify skills gaps and manage provision of learning and development solutions – continued development to 2007, then ongoing
- further development of a range of activities relating to Workplace Diversity – ongoing through to 2008
- continue evolution of the National Statistical Training Institute work program to meet internal and external training requirements – ongoing to 2009
- further improve and integrate HR systems to deliver a greater level of self service for employees – ongoing.

Technology Services

Program Manager

Jenine Borowik
First Assistant Statistician
Technology Services

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05	53.4
05/06	54.6
06/07	60.4
07/08	60.8
08/09	61.8

Staff usage 2004/05

409 staff years

Objectives

The key objectives for Technology Services Division (TSD) are to:

- provide reliable, value for money, IT services and infrastructure which support ABS 'business as usual'
- deliver new systems to meet the objectives of the Population Census, Household and Business Surveys
- continue support for statistical leadership initiatives, including the National Data Network (NDN)
- utilise technologies both within the ABS and externally to enable statistical software and services to be readily shared with other agencies
- enhance ABS capacity to respond to new demand
- support increased access to statistics
- ensure the security of sensitive data and statistics
- enhance productivity by fostering effective use of IT environment
- support innovative and productive ways of working
- maintain security vigilance for the ABS and its environment.

Outputs

TSD is an integral part of the ABS. It has three branches, Technology Application, Technology Infrastructure and Technology Research, which serve the ABS with high-quality information and technology leadership, expertise in the application of technology for business outcomes, and support to the organisation in providing an effective statistical service.

TSD supports all major processes for statistical and administrative functions of the ABS, and maintains and develops the underlying technology systems and infrastructure. The main outputs of the program are:

- a full range of application analysis, design, programming, acquisition and commissioning services to assist improving ABS business processes
- leadership to clients on new and developing technologies
- a reliable and secure technology infrastructure service
- an effective Knowledge Management environment
- development and implementation of enterprise architecture strategies
- input to whole of government strategies for the application of technology to business processes.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to support the development or acquisition of systems and infrastructure for core business activities including:

- the 2006 Australian Population Census, the 2006 Agriculture Census, Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006, and key Business surveys – due 2006
- longitudinal data collections (including the Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children and the Longitudinal Survey of Indigenous Children) – due during 2006
- the Integrated System for Household Surveys, re-engineering the Household Survey end-to-end processing model – progressively to June 2008
- the NDN, and a service-oriented architecture to support statistical leadership initiatives – progressively to June 2008.
- multimodal collection of data – progressively to June 2008
- improved metadata management – progressively to June 2008
- business process improvement – ongoing.

Statistical Leadership and Coordination

Program Manager

Steve Matheson
Assistant Statistician
Statistical Leadership and
Coordination Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

04/05 1.5

05/06 0.5

06/07 0.9

07/08 0.4

08/09 0.4

Staff usage 2004/05

14 staff years

References

National Statistical Service

www.nss.gov.au

Statistical Clearing House

www.sch.abs.gov.au

National Data Network

www.nationaldatanetwork.org

Objectives

The Statistical Leadership and Coordination program provides a focal point within the ABS for strategies aimed at strengthening and extending the National Statistical Service (NSS), including the development of whole-of-government statistical policy, strategies and infrastructure.

Within the ABS the program serves as a catalyst, coordinator and evaluator of NNS activities, particularly those which cut across two or more ABS program areas or involve the federal and other jurisdictions.

Externally, the program provides leadership and support to: policy and research professionals through the provision of best practice statistical guides and tools to assist in their statistical activities; and inter-agency committees associated with progressing the NSS.

The program also maintains and develops two key pieces of infrastructure, namely: 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; and the National Data Network (NDN) which provides a distributed library of data and related services for use in policy analysis and research.

The principal clients of the Statistical Leadership and Coordination program are producers and users of statistical information both within the ABS and in other federal, state, territory and local government organisations within Australia. The targeted outcomes of this program are: more and better quality data for policy and research; improved, and more widely available statistical infrastructure and services; and increased capability of producers and users of statistics.

Outputs

The Statistical Leadership and Coordination program has the following outputs:

- policy and strategies for the ongoing development of the NSS
- best practice materials and tools for collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of survey and administrative by-product data
- secretariat services to the Australian Government Statistical Forum and associated interdepartmental committees
- administration and delivery of the Australian Government Statistical Clearing House service, which provides a detailed assessment, suggestions for improvement, and formal approval of business surveys run by Australian government agencies
- NDN service
- reviews of NSS activities.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- complete the demonstration phase of the NDN – December 2006
- implement an ongoing program of reviews and evaluations of NSS activities – ongoing program in place by June 2007
- support the development of a community of producers and users of official statistics and the development of skills and capabilities therein – national symposium by December 2007
- promote the development of policy and strategies for the NSS, including specific strategies for ABS program areas in advancing NSS initiatives (eg. environment, population well-being, regional statistics, Census data enhancement) – ongoing

Appendix

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
- Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics
- Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey Reference Group
- Agriculture Statistics 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
- Centre of Environment and Energy Statistics Advisory Board
 - Energy Statistics Discussion Group
 - Water Statistics User Group
 - Environment Statistics Household Data and Integration Working Group
 - Land Statistics and Natural Resource Management Survey User Group
- Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group
- Cultural Ministers' Council Statistics Working Group
- Demography Statistics Advisory Group
- Economic Statistics User Group
- Education and Training Statistics Advisory Group
- Family Statistics Advisory Group
- General Social Survey Reference Group
- Health Statistics Advisory Group
- Household Income and Expenditure Statistics User Advisory Group
- Information and Communication Technology Statistics Reference Group
- Innovation Survey Technical Reference Group
- Input-Output Statistics User Group
- International Accounts Reference Group
- International Trade in Services User Group
- Labour Statistics Advisory Group
- Methodology Advisory Group
- Migrant Statistics Reference Group
- Mining User Advisory Group
- National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data
- National Ageing Statistics Advisory Group
- 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 Indigenous Housing Information Implementation Committee
- National Public Health Information Working Group
- Passenger Card Data User Group
- Passenger Card Steering Group
- Personal Safety Survey Advisory Group
- Population Estimates Technical Workshop
- Productivity Measurement Reference Group
- Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport Research Group
- Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers Advisory Group
- Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing Reference Group

Appendix *continued*

- Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group
- Social Capital Advisory Group
- State Accounts User 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
- 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
- State Statistical Priorities Committee (South Australia)
- Statistical Policy Committee and Economic (Western Australia)
- Social Statistics Consultative Groups (Western Australia)
- Statistical Policy Committee (Tasmania)
- Statistical Advisory Committee (Tasmania)
- Northern Territory Statistical Liaison Committee
- Australian Capital Territory Statistical Co-ordination Committee.

