



AUSTRALIAN STATISTICS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Annual Report 2018–19



© Commonwealth of Australia 2019

ISSN 01550780

This work is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence.

In all cases, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) must be acknowledged as the source when reproducing or quoting any part of an ABS publication or other product.

Please see the ABS website copyright statement for further details.

www.abs.gov.au

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their cultures and their Elders past and present.



AUSTRALIAN STATISTICS ADVISORY COUNCIL

ABS House, 45 Benjamin Way
Belconnen ACT 2617

Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616

Telephone: (03) 9615 7107
Email: asac@abs.gov.au



The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP
Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in submitting the Australian Statistics Advisory Council's annual report for the year ending 30 June 2019.

The report outlines the work and activities of the Council and is submitted to you for presentation to Parliament under sub-section 24(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

The Annual Report is dated on the day I approved the text for printing.

Yours sincerely

Professor Gary Banks AO
Chairperson

17 September 2019

Australian Statistics Advisory Council



Mission

To contribute to the effective development of Australia's statistical assets, by providing the Minister and the Statistician with independent, relevant and timely advice on national priorities.



The Australian Statistics Advisory Council and senior ABS staff at the meeting in Canberra on 13 March 2019.

Contents



Foreword	vi
Chapter	
1 About ASAC	1
2 Year in Review: 2018–19	5
3 Year Ahead: 2019–20	9
Appendices	
1 Membership of ASAC	14
2 2018 ASAC Statement of Intent	17
3 2019–20 ASAC Statement of Intent	19
4 ASAC 2018–19 meeting agendas	21
5 Freedom of Information	22

Note: After the first reference in this report, the Australian Statistics Advisory Council is referred to as the Council or ASAC and the Australian Bureau of Statistics is referred to as the ABS.

Foreword



*The Chairperson of ASAC,
Professor Gary Banks AO*

The bedrock of ‘evidence-based policy making’, and indeed decision making in business and society generally, is statistical information that is both relevant and robust. Furnishing such information is the core role of the ABS, which it has discharged with distinction over a long period. Arguably this national role, underpinned by statutory independence, has increased in importance as our society and economy have become more complex, with many contentious policy issues and a proliferation of (often conflicting) information sources.

In responding to such challenges, the ABS has been engaged in a major program of ‘transformation’ designed to upgrade its technical and organisational capability, and promote a culture of innovation and user focus. The Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) has continued to monitor developments over the past year and offer strategic advice, drawing on the breadth and seniority of its membership.

While considerable progress is evident, for which the ABS and its leadership are to be commended, it is also clear that transformation in a broader sense must become an ongoing process if the organisation is to meet the future challenges of its operating environment.

As emphasised in last year’s report, adequate resourcing is central to maintaining the quality of the ABS’s core statistical offerings, let alone its ability to respond to the rising needs and expectations of users. Budgetary tightening over the years has led to the paring back or cessation of certain collections, with some invidious choices facing the forward work program, on which ASAC’s advice has been sought. How proposals for budgetary supplementation are treated will be crucial to the capacity of the ABS to meet society’s information needs in the short as well as longer terms, and indeed the needs of government itself.

This annual report provides a brief account of ASAC’s role and activities over the past year and some areas of focus for the year ahead. The Council’s periodic face-to-face meetings are central to its contribution and I thank members for the depth and frankness of discussions. There were a number of changes of membership during the year and I note the appreciation of the Council for the contribution of those whose terms concluded. On the Council’s behalf I would also like to thank the ASAC Secretariat for its commitment and support.

Just prior to finalising this report, it was made known that the Australian Statistician, David W. Kalisch, would not be continuing beyond his current term. I would like to take this opportunity to record the Council’s deep appreciation for David’s leadership at the ABS and for the important contribution he has made.

Professor Gary Banks AO
Chairperson

Chapter 1

About ASAC



Chapter 1

About ASAC



ASAC was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* (the ABS Act). Under subsection 18(1) of the ABS Act, the Council is to advise the Minister and the Australian Statistician on:

- (a) *the improvement, extension and co-ordination 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.*

Subsection 24(1) of the ABS Act provides that: *the Council must, as soon as practicable after 30 June in each year, prepare and submit to the Minister, for presentation to the Parliament, a report relating to matters connected with the operation of this Act.*

The ABS Act enables both the relevant Minister and the Australian Statistician to seek advice from the Council on these matters. The Australian Statistician keeps the Council informed of key developments related to the ABS. The Chairperson meets with the Minister and Australian Statistician as appropriate to ensure relevant advice and assistance from the Council are made available to them.

Role and operations of the Council

ASAC contributes to ABS decision-making regarding statistical priorities and helps inform its assessment of risks and appropriate strategies, as well as being an advocate for a national statistical system that is adequately resourced and effectively managed.

The ABS Act provides that the Council shall consist of a part-time Chairperson, the Australian Statistician (*ex officio*), and between ten and twenty-two part-time members, including a senior official from each State and Territory nominated by the Premier or Chief Minister. In addition, the Council includes representatives from academia, business and community sectors. Council members are appointed for their ability to identify emerging issues and assist in promoting greater coordination nationally.

During 2018–19, the Ministers responsible for the ABS and ASAC were the Hon. Michael Sukkar MP, Assistant Minister to the Treasurer (until late August 2018), who was then succeeded by the Hon. Stuart Robert MP, Assistant Treasurer. The Minister appoints the Council Chairperson and members, for five and three years respectively. Members are eligible for reappointment when their terms expire.

As at 30 June 2019, the Council membership totalled fifteen, including the Chairperson, Professor Gary Banks AO. The names and positions of those serving during the year are detailed at Appendix 1.

The Chairperson receives an annual fee as set by the Remuneration Tribunal, with other members serving in an honorary capacity. Members receive a prescribed travel allowance, where applicable, to support their attendance at meetings.

The Council meets in formal session three times a year, in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne (by rotation) as well as interacting out of session on any specific matters requiring its attention.

The office of the ASAC Secretary is held by Stephen Collett, Program Manager, Indigenous and Social Information Branch. Costs associated with the operations of ASAC are met from the ABS budget, and secretariat services are provided, as part of their wider duties, by ABS staff. Council secretariat services include: arranging and supporting meetings; administering ASAC activities and membership; and, preparation of its Annual Report and any submissions, correspondence or papers to be issued under its authority or that of the Chairperson.

A formal Statement of Intent outlining the role of ASAC and its areas of focus in 2018 can be found in Appendix 2. Henceforth, the Statement of Intent will be produced on a financial year basis, to align with the Council's annual report. The Statement for 2019–20 was finalised following the Council's March 2019 meeting, and can be found in Appendix 3.

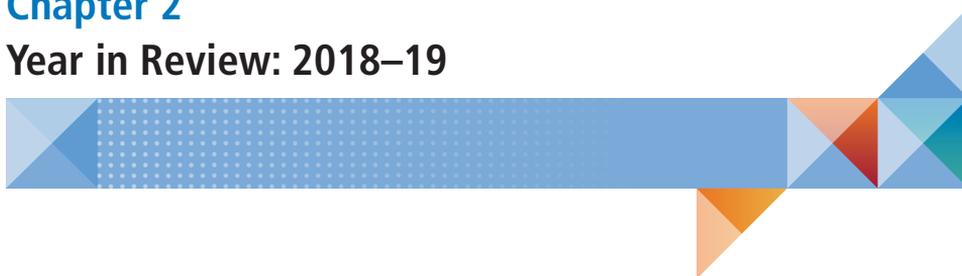
Chapter 2

Year in Review: 2018–19



Chapter 2

Year in Review: 2018–19



The Council held three meetings during 2018–19: in August and November 2018 and March 2019 (see Appendix 4 for agendas).

ABS Forward Work Program and budget

The Council discussed the 2018–19 Forward Work Program and ongoing challenges for the ABS in sustaining and enhancing the key statistical infrastructure it provides.

The Council reiterated its view that such collections as the National Accounts, the Consumer Price Index, Labour Force Statistics and Estimated Resident Population remain of critical national importance. Such areas must involve low tolerance for risk, notwithstanding reductions in overall funding, in order to maintain quality and trust in the robustness of data.

ASAC provided advice on proposed adjustments to the ABS' statistical program, which included prioritisation and cessation or modifications to the frequency of some collections, and increasing the use of data collected by other entities. Such changes have yielded only minor cost savings to date.

The ABS is obliged to respond to the increasing demand for evidence and data to ensure its work program remains relevant and of maximum value to a broad range of users. However, the ABS must balance customer expectations with the requirements of core stakeholders, including government.

2021 Census of Population and Housing

During the year, preparations were underway for the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, the core source of information about Australians and the way they live. The ABS' approach to planning has been informed by learnings from the 2016 Census and the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey. The ABS has also sought the advice of the Council on elements of the program's planning, funding and topic consultations.

The topics covered in each Census are reviewed with a view to reflect Australia's contemporary requirements. Alongside extensive public consultation, the ABS sought input from ASAC on a range of additional topics considered to have a strong case for being included in the 2021 Census, with a view to presenting recommendations to Government in the second half of 2019.

Following the experience of the 2016 Census and subsequent public discussion, the Council has advised the ABS on means of proactively managing key messages related to the Census. Outside the Census 'year', milestones in the process can be of considerable interest to the media and wider community. One example this year was the engagement of an external supplier to provide a secure, fast and simple digital service for the 2021 Census. The Council noted the gains in social licence by transparently reporting on the provision of these services.

The Council also advised the ABS in relation to its interactions with the Government to address identified funding challenges for the 2021 Census. The ABS has observed that it is

unable to self-fund measures to sufficiently mitigate key risks. Additional funding that would reduce some of these risks was allocated in the 2019–20 Budget.

ABS transformation agenda

The ABS transformation journey, detailed in previous reports, continued throughout the 2018–19 financial year, with the Council providing advice where appropriate to assist the ABS to achieve goals within the Statistical Business Transformation Program (SBTP) and across its broader transformation activities.

The ABS is immersed in a critical phase of the SBTP with funding due to cease at the end of the 2019–20 financial year. The Council supported the ABS revising the scope of the Program to mitigate risks to core statistical products. The Council recommended early engagement with central agencies to enable agreement and planning within the revised timeline.

Data integration and access

It is essential for the ABS to be innovative and at the forefront of new developments that enhance the data landscape. ASAC supports, for example, the ABS' prioritisation and ongoing investment (funded by Government in the 2017–18 Budget) in data assets and infrastructure that have enabled continued advancements in data integration.

The Council retains a keen interest in the progress of the broader data integration program, the ABS' role as the primary integrating authority for the Data Integration Partnership for Australia (DIPA) and the policy and service delivery insights that are increasingly being delivered from those developing data integration assets. The Council also welcomed a strengthening of the relationship between the ABS and the Office of the National Data Commissioner, including appointment in March 2019 of the Australian Statistician to the National Data Advisory Council.

There is an expectation across DIPA partners and APS data custodians that the growing momentum of DIPA programs will bring an increased focus on data and data integration by government, researchers and academics. The Council agreed on the importance of investment in the comprehensive longitudinal data assets *Multi-Agency Data Integration Project* (MADIP) and *Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment* (BLADE).

Council members have also advocated for data integration initiatives in their respective jurisdictions or sectors, given the scope for these to improve the national evidence base for decision-making.

ABS 2025 strategy

As the ABS' current transformation program nears completion, attention has focussed on strategic directions over the next 3-5 years, in order to ensure that the ABS is best placed to deliver public value for the community. These directions recognise a number of emerging shifts within the data landscape and developments within the broader economy and society.

Areas highlighted by Council members for ABS consideration included understanding the place of potential institutional partners and competitors, building data capability across governments and the economy, leveraging the ABS' comparative advantages, influencing the national data landscape, and the effective management of risks, actual and emerging.

The Council will continue to play a role as the strategic directions are finalised and integrated into the ABS operating model and work program decisions.

Chapter 3

Year Ahead: 2019–20



Chapter 3

Year Ahead: 2019–20



ASAC's Statement of Intent for 2019–20 (see Appendix 3) frames the Council's priorities over the coming year.

ABS work program and resourcing

Organisational objectives outlined in the ABS' 2019–20 to 2022–23 Corporate Plan are:

- ABS statistics are trusted and used to inform important decisions;
- partnerships to enable better decisions; and,
- new statistics to support Australia's emerging priorities.

These are concerned with maintaining the quality and coverage of existing collections, as well as expanding them where there is likely to be a significant payoff. The Council will continue to lend support to the ABS in relation to resourcing strategies, prioritisation decisions for investment in statistics and infrastructure, and identification of key risks.

ABS customers' expectations continue to rise and demands for access to ABS data have been increasing. This places pressure on the ABS to continue investing in key statistical assets if it is to ensure provision of data that is most relevant to customer needs.

The Council is highly supportive of the ABS' continued efforts to maintain the high quality of core statistical products, while ensuring Census preparations remain on track.

2021 Census of Population and Housing

As noted in Chapter 2, the ABS has made significant progress in its preparations for the 2021 Census, including work needed to inform recommendations to government on Census topics, and key technology procurements. Risk management, resourcing and technology are all expected to require ongoing attention.

The next twelve months are a critical phase that includes the key milestones of building core digital infrastructure, detailed preparation for field operations, and completion of a significant test in late 2019. The latter, which will be voluntary, will enable an assessment of the 'response window' and further testing of some potential Census content, as well as aspects of field enumeration.

ASAC will continue to advise the ABS on strategies for effective engagement with government, media and the community, including messaging around the handling of key privacy and data security matters.

ABS transformation initiatives

At its conclusion in June 2020, the ambitious SBTP is expected to have delivered the vast majority of benefits to clients and external users of ABS data. Prudent decisions have been taken to minimise emerging risks to core statistical products and processes.

Transformation needs to lead with the broader messages around increasing the public value delivered by the ABS and governments making better use of ABS data and capability. Transformation will be an ongoing challenge for the ABS as it continues to build capabilities and skills that meet the future needs of the nation and respond to the opportunities and challenges of an evolving data landscape.

As noted previously, the ABS has recently been giving detailed consideration to future priorities, to capitalise on new statistical and technological capabilities and a stronger innovation culture. ASAC is being consulted by the ABS as part of this process, which will see existing priorities around investment in quality data and new data solutions expanded by a greater focus on the ABS' position as a leader nationally in statistical systems and skills development.

ABS role within an evolving institutional landscape

Progressing a range of reforms to Australia's data system remains a core focus for the Council, including initiatives to promote coherence across data users and custodians.

The Council recognises a need for:

- reduced data duplication, to improve efficiency and remove inconsistencies;
- efficient ways to share and use data safely;
- building capability across government (both domestically and internationally) to effectively manage and analyse data; and
- efficient management of public data through effective stewardship.

ASAC will assist the ABS as it seeks to clarify its roles and responsibilities within this evolving data landscape, with the ABS being well positioned to provide stewardship for efficient data collection and access. In addition, the Council will work with the ABS to identify data gaps and assess opportunities for developing data solutions and capability building, along with advocating for the ethical management and use of data.

In 2018, the Australian Government commissioned an independent review of the Australian Public Service (APS)¹. The final review report will be made available in the second half of 2019, which may present an opportunity for both the Council and the ABS to provide a response to recommendations on planned reforms for the APS.

An effective, cooperative relationship with government is important to advancing the ABS' leadership role within the wider institutional environment. The Council and its chairperson can assist the ABS in this both directly and in their own dealings with governments.

¹ <https://www.apsreview.gov.au/about>

Building and maintaining trust and social licence

Building and maintaining trust are essential to progressing the ambitious data agendas of Australian governments. The ABS has been heavily involved in work by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to develop a whole-of-government framework to underpin public trust in data use.

The ABS is also developing internal strategies consistent with the wider framework. The Council has stressed the importance of the ABS proactively engaging the public in a conversation about data use, especially around privacy and data security concerns and in the lead up to the 2021 Census.

ABS capability

The ABS is internationally recognised for its capabilities in data methodologies and techniques. It continues to develop the skills of its staff as a core investment in public sector capability. The wider sharing of these skills domestically, including in standardised data practices, can broaden the expertise of data users around the country. A lack of public sector staff with the requisite skills can lead to the mishandling of data, and loss of public trust.

The Council believes the ABS has the skills and capability to provide greater leadership across the public sector (state, territory and Commonwealth) and will seek to assist in its efforts to enhance its role nationally.

Appendices



Appendix 1

Membership of ASAC*



Member	Date first appointed
Professor Gary Banks AO Professorial Fellow Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research The University of Melbourne	28 February 2017
Mr David W. Kalisch Australian Statistician (<i>ex officio</i>) Australian Bureau of Statistics	15 December 2014
Mr Adam Boyton Chief Economist Business Council of Australia	4 April 2019
Mr David Byers Chief Executive Officer CO2CRC Limited	30 April 2018
Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark Professor of Economics The University of Sydney	2 November 2015
Dr Luci Ellis Assistant Governor (Economic) Reserve Bank of Australia	2 November 2015
Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver AM Deputy Vice Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Service The University of Sydney	8 April 2013
Professor Abigail Payne Director and Ronald Henderson Professor Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research The University of Melbourne	30 April 2018
Ms Meghan Quinn PSM Deputy Secretary, Macroeconomic Group The Treasury	4 April 2019

*as at 30 June 2019

State/Territory Representatives	Date first appointed
Ms Amy Auster Deputy Secretary, Economic Division Department of Treasury and Finance, Victoria	23 March 2017
Mr Antony Skinner Director and Queensland Government Statistician Queensland Treasury	8 April 2013
Mr Alistair Jones Executive Director, Economic Department of Treasury, Western Australia	31 October 2018
Mr Anton Voss Deputy Secretary, Economic and Financial Policy Division Department of Treasury and Finance, Tasmania	14 July 2014
Mr David Braines-Mead Deputy Under Treasurer Department of Treasury and Finance, Northern Territory	3 July 2018
Mr Stephen Miners Deputy Under Treasurer, Economic, Budget and Industrial Relations Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, Australian Capital Territory	5 June 2018

Changes in Membership in 2018–19

The following members and state/territory representatives were appointed to the Council during 2018–19:

- Mr Adam Boyton
- Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark*
- Dr Luci Ellis*
- Ms Meghan Quinn PSM
- Mr Alistair Jones
- Mr David Braines-Mead

* Re-appointment

The Council farewelled six members in 2018–19:

- Ms Lisa Gropp: member since 2 November 2015, term completed 1 November 2018.
- Mr Nigel Ray PSM: Australian Government representative since 2 November 2015, resigned on 31 October 2018.
- Professor Judith Sloan: member since 2 November 2015, term completed 1 November 2018.
- Dr Caralee McLeish PSM: New South Wales Government representative since 19 December 2016, resigned 28 September 2018.
- Mr Chris McGowan: South Australian Government representative since 23 May 2011, term completed 19 October 2018.
- Mr Kurt Sibma: Western Australian Government representative since 9 July 2015, term completed 8 July 2018.

Mr Stephen Walters was originally appointed to the Council on 2 November 2015 in his capacity as Chief Economist at JP Morgan (subsequently Chief Economist at the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)). In mid-2018, Mr Walters resigned from his position at the AICD to take up the role of Chief Economist at the NSW Treasury. He has since been proposed for appointment by the NSW Government to replace the former NSW representative to ASAC, Dr Caralee McLeish.

Appendix 2

2018 ASAC Statement of Intent



Purpose and Role of ASAC

- 1 The Australian Statistical Advisory Council (ASAC) was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* (the ABS Act).

The ABS Act (section 18) states that:

- (1) The functions of the Council are to advise the Minister and the Statistician in relation to:
 - (a) the improvement, extension and co-ordination 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.
- (2) Either the Minister or the Statistician, or both of them, may refer matters of the kind referred to in subsection (1) to the Council for the purpose of seeking the advice of the Council in relation to those matters.

- 2 In line with its legislated functions, ASAC will represent government and community interests by advising the Minister and the Australian Statistician on Australia's current and longer-term statistical priorities and how the ABS work program can deliver on them.
- 3 As an advisory forum to the ABS with broad membership and understanding of the wider environment, ASAC will:
 - Advise the Minister and the ABS in relation to the ABS' functions
 - Provide input into the strategic directions, risks, priorities and key deliverables of the ABS
 - Advocate for an effective national statistical system and support the ABS' role within it
 - Report annually to Parliament.
- 4 To help the ABS respond to issues and plan for the future, ASAC will:
 - Provide the ABS with frank advice and feedback
 - Draw on the expertise of ASAC members and seek input from stakeholders
 - Raise risks and identify potential issues
 - Provide guidance to ensure the ABS remains a trusted and relevant data provider.

- 5 The Chairperson of ASAC will convey advice to the Minister and report back at ASAC meetings.
- 6 ASAC's membership is balanced to ensure varied community and government representation while remaining of a manageable size. Members are appointed for their ability to identify emerging needs and promote the value of data and its coordination within and across jurisdictions and sectors. They will have the seniority to navigate and help influence the decision-making environment and, by understanding the key aspects and drivers of the statistical system, will ensure the Council retains a strategic focus.

Priorities for 2018

- **Preparation for 2021 Census** – content of the Census to be re-examined as topics have remained unchanged since the 2011 Census; the Council can assist both in suggesting and reviewing potential changes, as well as advising on managing public expectations and input.
- **ABS transformation** – provision of ongoing monitoring and advice to ensure that goals are realised for both the Statistical Business Transformation Program and broader transformation activities.
- **Data integration and access** – advise on data integration activities that can improve the national evidence base for decision-making, and on the ABS's role in the Data Integration Partnership for Australia. ASAC to help promote the benefits of this work. ASAC may also advise on issues for the ABS raised by the Government's response to the Productivity Commission report on Data Availability and Use.
- **Resourcing key collections** – ASAC's 2016–17 Annual Report noted the risks to ABS national collections posed by current funding arrangements. ASAC to provide guidance to the Minister/Government and the ABS about key statistical collections and resourcing implications.

2018 Directions

- 1 Three face-to-face meetings are planned for 2018, with further opportunities for engagement as required between meetings. In addition to the Canberra meeting in February, meetings will be held in Melbourne (August) and Sydney (November).
- 2 In line with requirements prescribed in subsection 24(1) of the ABS Act, ASAC will continue to provide an annual report to the Minister.

Appendix 3

2019–20 ASAC Statement of Intent



Purpose and Role of ASAC

- 1 The Australian Statistical Advisory Council (ASAC) was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* (the ABS Act).

The ABS Act (section 18) states that:

- (1) The functions of the Council are to advise the Minister and the Statistician in relation to:
 - (a) the improvement, extension and co-ordination 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.
- (2) Either the Minister or the Statistician, or both of them, may refer matters of the kind referred to in subsection (1) to the Council for the purpose of seeking the advice of the Council in relation to those matters.

- 2 In line with its legislated functions, ASAC will represent government and community interests by advising the Minister and the Australian Statistician on Australia's current and longer-term statistical priorities and how the ABS work program can deliver on them.
- 3 As an advisory forum to the ABS with broad membership and understanding of the wider environment, ASAC will:
 - Advise the Minister and the ABS in relation to the ABS' functions
 - Provide input into the strategic directions, risks, priorities and key deliverables of the ABS
 - Advocate for an effective national statistical system and support the ABS' role within it
 - Report annually to Parliament.

- 4 To help the ABS respond to issues and plan for the future, ASAC will:
 - Provide the ABS with frank advice and feedback
 - Draw on the expertise of ASAC members and seek input from stakeholders
 - Raise risks and identify potential issues
 - Provide guidance where needed to ensure the ABS remains a trusted and relevant data provider.
- 5 The Chairperson of ASAC will convey advice to the Minister and report back at ASAC meetings.
- 6 ASAC members are appointed for their ability to identify emerging needs and promote the value of data and its coordination within and across jurisdictions and sectors. They will have the seniority to navigate and help influence the decision-making environment and will ensure the Council retains a strategic focus.

Priorities for 2019–20

- **Monitor and advise on implementation of ABS transformation initiatives**, including broad organisational transformation and the Statistical Business Transformation Program (SBTP).
- **Monitor and advise on 2021 Census preparation**, including managing key stakeholder relationships and risks.
- **Assist in clarifying ABS roles and responsibilities within an evolving institutional landscape**, including the promotion of a coherent broader statistical system and shaping the data landscape across government and beyond.
- **Advice on structuring an ABS Forward Work Program under significant resource constraints**, including: strategies to support appropriate funding; identifying potential risks to ABS data and reputation; and the identification of the ABS' 'core' assets and any associated strategy to guide investment in these assets.
- **Building and maintaining trust and 'social licence'**, including advocacy in support of decisions that would help maintain trust of government and the community that privacy concerns have been addressed.
- **ABS capability building**, including advice on the ABS' plans to strengthen its leadership role in data skills development and capability across governments and academia.

2019–20 Directions

- 1 Three face-to-face meetings are planned for 2019–20: August 2019 (Sydney), November 2019 (Melbourne) and March 2020 (Canberra). Additional engagement outside meetings will be undertaken as appropriate.
- 2 Among other matters, meetings are to include a 'workshop' as input to the ABS 2025 strategy process and an internal review of ASAC's operations.
- 3 In line with requirements prescribed in subsection 24(1) of the ABS Act, ASAC will continue to provide an annual report to the Minister.

Appendix 4

ASAC 2018–19 meeting agendas



1 August 2018

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Statistician's report
3. Members' reports
4. Forward Work Program considerations for 2018–19
5. Census 2021 process and overall funding requirements
6. Labour Force Survey: Changes needed to promote sustainability
7. Other business

14 November 2018

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Statistician's report
3. Members' reports
4. Outcomes of the 'Stakeholder Relationship Health Assessment Report'
5. Statistical Business Transformation Program update
6. Update on ABS' financial sustainability
7. Data sharing and release forums
8. ASAC priorities for 2019
9. Other business

13 March 2019

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Statistician's report
3. Members' reports
4. ABS 2025 strategy
5. 2019–20 Forward Work Program
6. 2021 Census content development update
7. ASAC priorities for 2019–20
8. Other business

Appendix 5

Freedom of Information



In accordance with section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, details of the structure and functions of ASAC and how members of the public can obtain access to information held by the Council are outlined below.

Establishment, organisation and functions

For information regarding the establishment, organisation and function of ASAC, see Chapter 1 – About ASAC.

Powers

As an advisory body, ASAC has no decision-making or other powers directly affecting members of the public. The Council does not administer any enactments or schemes.

Arrangements for outside participation

ASAC members are appointed by the Minister responsible for the ABS to ensure a broad range of views and interests are reflected in the advice that the Council offers to the Minister and the Australian Statistician. For membership details, see Appendix 1.

Persons or bodies outside the Australian Government administration may contribute matters for the Council's consideration by making representations to the Minister or the ASAC Chairperson. Contributions can be directed in writing to the ASAC Secretary at the address below.

Information available

The ASAC Annual Report is available from ABS offices, and on the ASAC and ABS websites. The ABS maintains records on behalf of ASAC relating to: the administration of the Council; papers discussed at Council meetings; summary records of meeting proceedings; and correspondence relating to the activities of the Council.

Feedback and enquiries

ASAC welcomes feedback on this report. Feedback or enquiries related to accessing ASAC documents, including enquiries under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, may be directed in writing (by post or email) to:

Secretary
Australian Statistics Advisory Council
c/- Australian Bureau of Statistics
Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Email: asac@abs.gov.au