



MS25-000002

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS ACT 1975: sub-section 6(3)

BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) proposes to collect information for the purpose of providing information on characteristics of Australian businesses and key measures of innovation and use of information technology within businesses.

The information will be collected:

- commencing from October 2025 on a biennial basis;
- from employing Australian businesses;
- as a sample of about 6,500 businesses;
- by self-enumeration using a web based electronic form;
- across Australia.

Information will be collected on a range of characteristics including:

- employment, working arrangements and skills used;
- business practices and performance;
- business finance and assistance;
- markets and competition
- internet connectivity and activities;
- cyber security;
- business use of information and communication technologies;
- business use of clean technologies;
- innovation activity and collaboration for innovation;
- innovation expenditure and funding;
- environmental benefits of introduced innovation
- respondent contact details, including provider name, telephone number and email address, in the event the ABS needs to contact the provider to resolve any queries (each cycle).

In addition to the core questions, a modular suite of questions will be included to reflect contemporary areas of interest to stakeholders regarding business behaviour or characteristics. The modular suite of questions will vary each cycle. The first modular suite for 2024-25 will comprise questions relating to the principal manager of the business, including age (in ranges), gender, length of employment, and previous position. No other personal or sensitive information on Principal Managers will be collected.

The information collected will be used by the ABS in the:

- analysis of changes to businesses over time and the impact these changes have on productivity and profitability;
- compilation of the publication *Characteristics of Australian Business*;
- compilation of the Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE) for the purpose of longitudinal microdata analysis; and
- fulfilment of international reporting obligations.

The ABS expects to make statistical and related information from the collection available approximately one year after the end of the survey reference period.

The principal users of the information the ABS produces will be:

- Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR);
- Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA);
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- Treasury;
- Future Skills Organisation
- Safe Work Australia
- Various universities and academics; and
- Various state/territory government departments and agencies.

The information will be used for:

- analysis (including longitudinal microdata analysis using BLADE);
- development and assessment of government policies and programs;
- compilation of publications (e.g. DISR's *Australian Innovation Statistics*); and
- international benchmarking.

To assist in determining the feasibility of the collection and to understand and manage respondent burden consistent with the Government's Regulator Performance Framework, the ABS has:

- considered what existing information is available;
- conducted extensive stakeholder consultation with key stakeholders; other federal, state and territory government stakeholders; and tertiary and other stakeholders;
- conducted cognitive and observational forms testing with survey respondents; and
- redeveloped the survey to ensure that the required data are available and provider load has been minimised.

This collection was last conducted in October 2023 and was previously tabled in Parliament as Proposal No. 5 of 2021.

Marcel Van Kints
General Manager
Statistical Production and Digital Services Division

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