



Brief for incoming Government

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Table of contents

Our role and leadership

1. Supporting your priorities

2. Modernising services and systems

3. Strengthening Australia's national statistics

Immediate actions

ABS Executive contacts

2

4

6

6

7

7

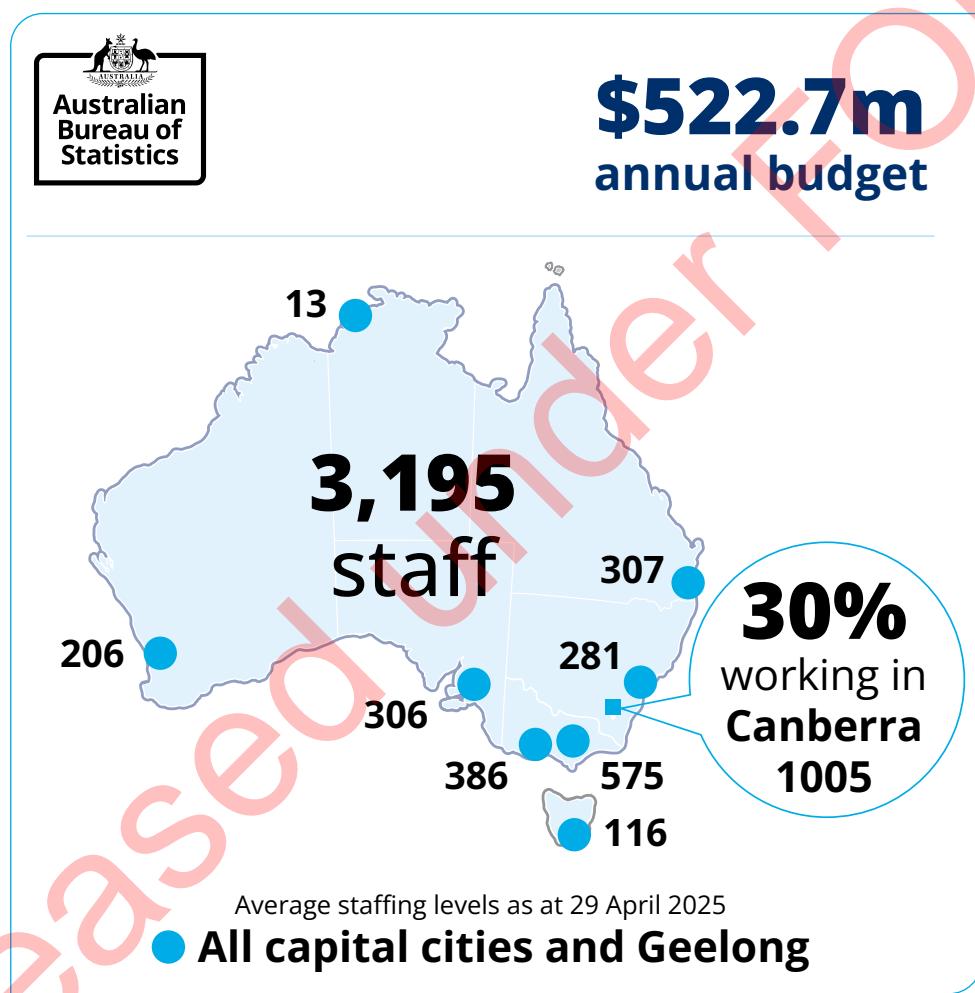
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Our role and leadership

The ABS

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is an independent statutory authority in the Treasury portfolio. We produce objective, relevant and trusted official statistics, informing the important decisions made by Government, businesses and the community. The ABS employs 3,195 staff with a budget of \$522.7 million in 2024-25. We have offices in every capital city and Geelong, with 70% of our staff (2,190) located outside Canberra (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Composition of ABS staff and offices across Australia



Our statistics provide a window into the lives of Australian households, communities and businesses as they face cost of living pressures and a changing economic landscape. In 2024-25 the ABS has conducted 30 different types of surveys, many of them monthly or quarterly, which will contribute to around 500 statistical releases. We are also preparing for the 2026 Census, which will give a snapshot of who we are as a nation and tell the story of how Australia is changing. An overview of the ABS is at [Attachment A](#).

With the support of successive governments, the ABS has been modernising the way we source and process data. We are moving to a digital-first approach for surveys to lower costs and increase productivity. This will also improve the experience and lower the burden for the Australian families and businesses that complete our surveys. Where possible, we are reducing the need for surveys by using non-survey data.

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A summary of our key modernisation initiatives is at [Attachment B](#).

Our data

The ABS sources data from surveys, the Census and non-survey data, such as administrative data from government and transactional data from the private sector, including supermarket scanner and insurance premium data.

We are a world leader in data linkage, with two key integrated data assets: the Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA) and the Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE). These powerful datasets include, in de-identified form, all Australians and Australian businesses. They offer unique insights into health, education, and employment outcomes, as well as migration patterns and business profitability, supporting Government to make informed and impactful decisions.

Complementing the wealth of information publicly available on our website, we have invested in tools to make our detailed integrated data available in a safe and secure environment. 2,200 analysts from government, private and research sectors access this important data. We are continually exploring ways to sustainably expand and enhance our services. An outline of our data integration program is at [Attachment C](#).

Australian Statistics Advisory Council

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) provides advice to you and the ABS on statistical services. You appoint the Chair and members of the council. Members represent a broad range of perspectives, including government, business, academia, and community interests. The current Chair, Professor Emeritus Ian Harper AO, was appointed for a 5-year term in February 2022 by the Hon Michael Sukkar MP.

1 Supporting your priorities

ABS data provides transparency for the impact of Government spending and regulation. It has a critical role in informing good policy and evaluating program effectiveness.

Australia's economy and business environment

We provide trusted statistics on Australia's economic performance to inform macroeconomic analysis and forecasting, fiscal and monetary policy, and international comparisons. The ABS is responsive to changing Government data priorities, as demonstrated by our late-2022 introduction of a monthly Consumer Price Index (CPI) indicator to complement the long standing quarterly CPI at a time of sharply rising inflation. **S47E**

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Housing and families

We produce key statistics on housing (e.g. housing values, construction, and finance) and demography (e.g. population, migration, and household composition). The ABS is working with partners across government to increase access to housing data and research through our integrated data services. The Census provides Australia's most definitive view of household structure, which is critical to decisions on affordable housing. This year the ABS will enhance the Measuring What Matters framework by delivering an annual General Social Survey **S47E**

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[Attachment D.](#)

Climate and environment

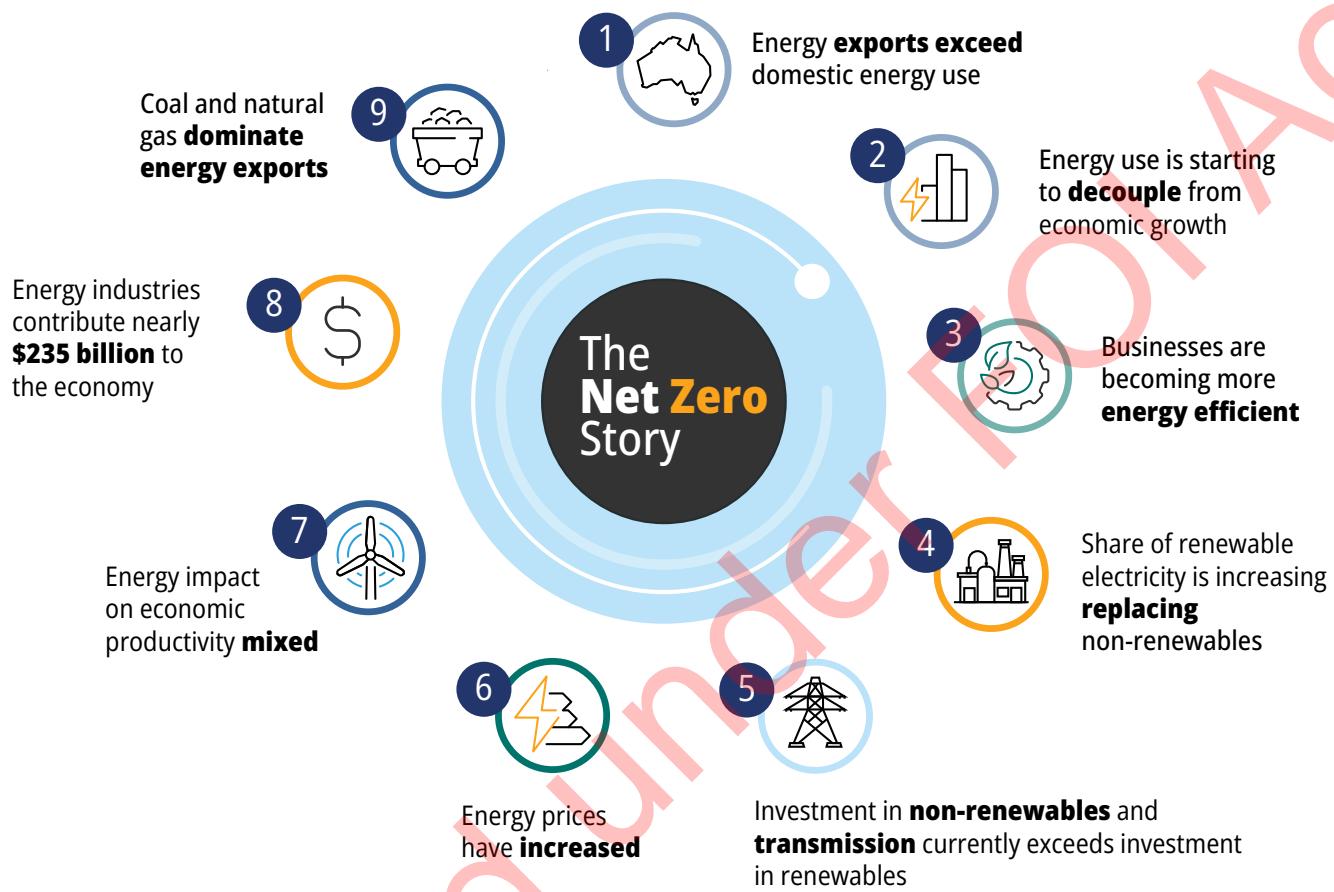
The ABS collects and shares important data and information about Australia's environment, environmental management and protection. The ABS produces [National Ecosystem](#), [Land](#), [Energy](#) and [Water](#) Accounts that keep track of the state of our environment, the services it provides to us and our impact on the world.

S47E (see Figure 2).

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Over 34.5 million kilotonnes of carbon was stored by ecosystems, with a combined monetary value of \$43.2 billion. Land reserved for nature conservation is now at 72.2 million hectares.

Figure 2 – Australia’s Net Zero Story



The ABS can measure changes in land and water use over time from both an economic and environmental perspective. **S47E**

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2 Modernising services and systems

The ABS is transforming our collection approach to make it more secure, cheaper and less burdensome for households and businesses. S4 / E [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. We are also generating insights more rapidly, getting surveys into the field and publishing results faster to ensure data is available as soon as possible.

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3 Strengthening Australia's national statistics

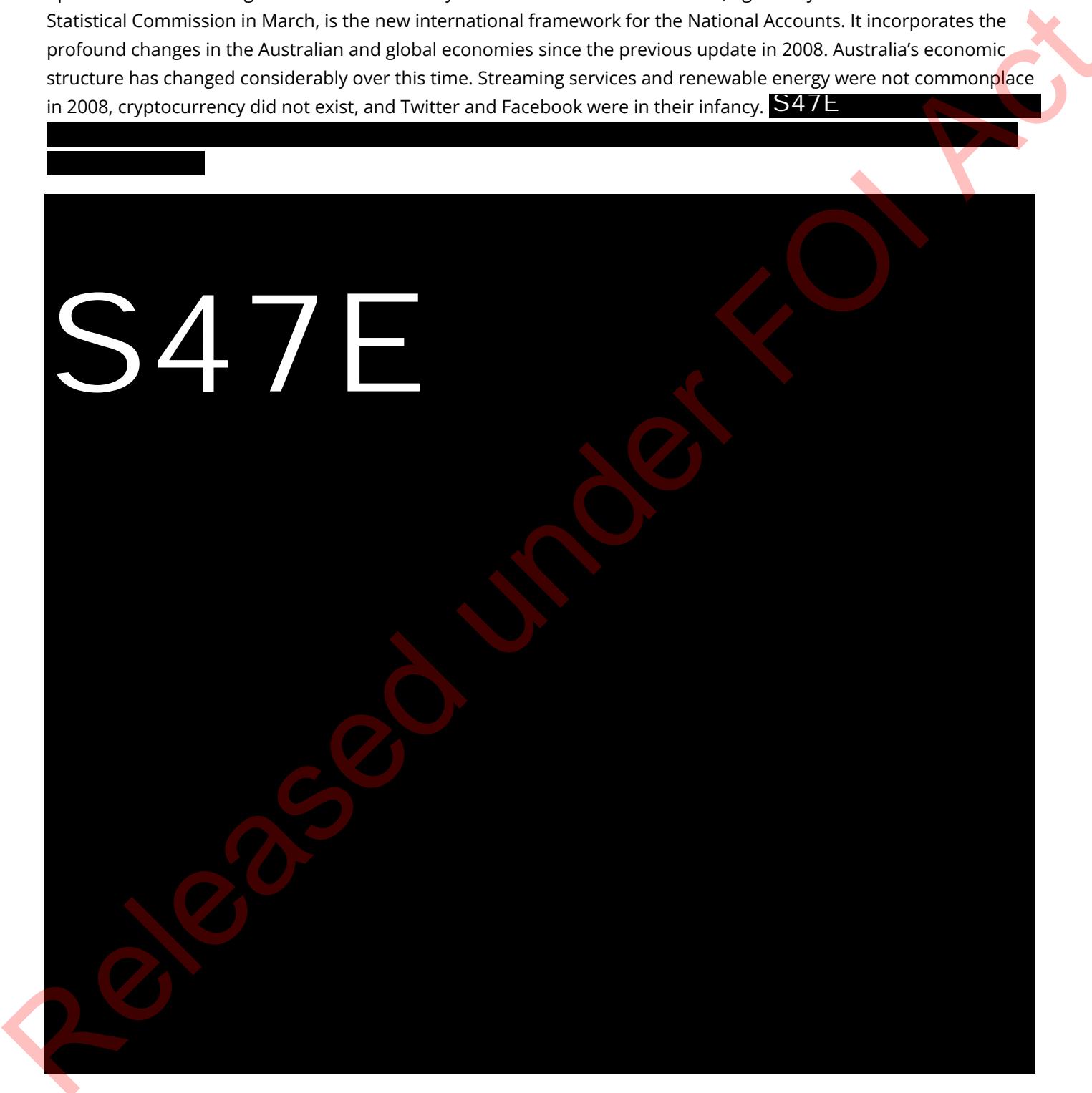
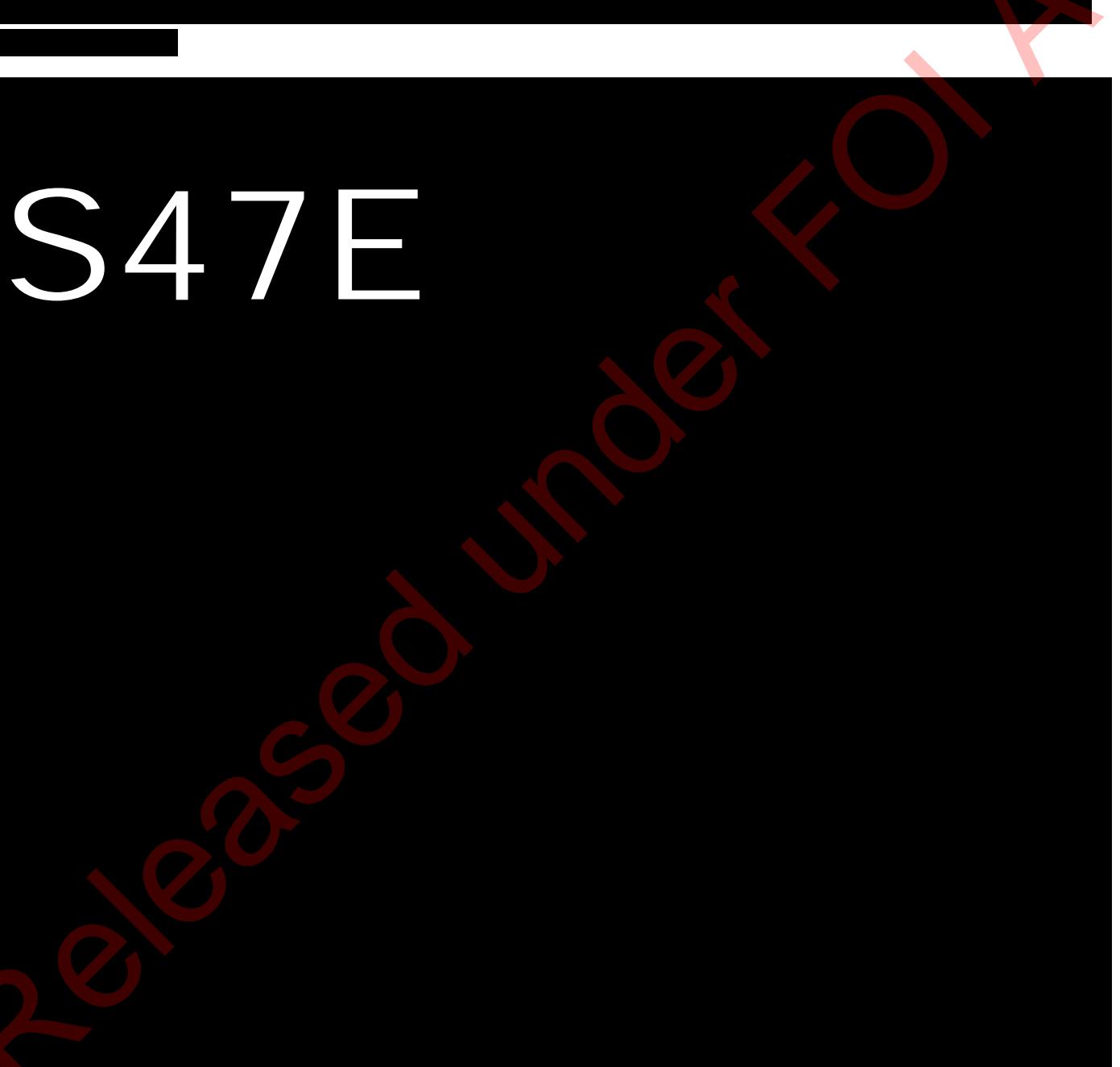
We are reducing the cost of producing essential statistics (e.g. replacing the Retail Business Survey with bank transactions data, S4 / E [REDACTED]), delivering more detailed and higher frequency statistics using cloud technology (e.g. increasing the CPI frequency from quarterly to monthly), and replacing large and costly surveys with cheaper and improved collections methods (e.g. replacing agriculture surveys with administrative data and satellite mapping, reducing farmer reporting burden by 97% – saving farmers 20,000 hours per annum – and survey staff costs by 60%). Our corporate plan includes a full list of statistical releases by theme.

Australia's next Census

S47E [REDACTED] and will employ 30,000 field staff across the country at peak. Preparations are on track, with a major field test of the Census digital service and field operations to be conducted in August 2025. The Census will for the first time collect data on sexual orientation and gender, for people aged 16 years and over. Our current Census preparation activities are detailed at [Attachment E](#).

Measuring the modern economy

Economic statistics are underpinned by internationally agreed standards and frameworks, which are periodically updated to reflect changes in economies. The System of National Accounts 2025, agreed by the United Nations Statistical Commission in March, is the new international framework for the National Accounts. It incorporates the profound changes in the Australian and global economies since the previous update in 2008. Australia's economic structure has changed considerably over this time. Streaming services and renewable energy were not commonplace in 2008, cryptocurrency did not exist, and Twitter and Facebook were in their infancy. **S47E**

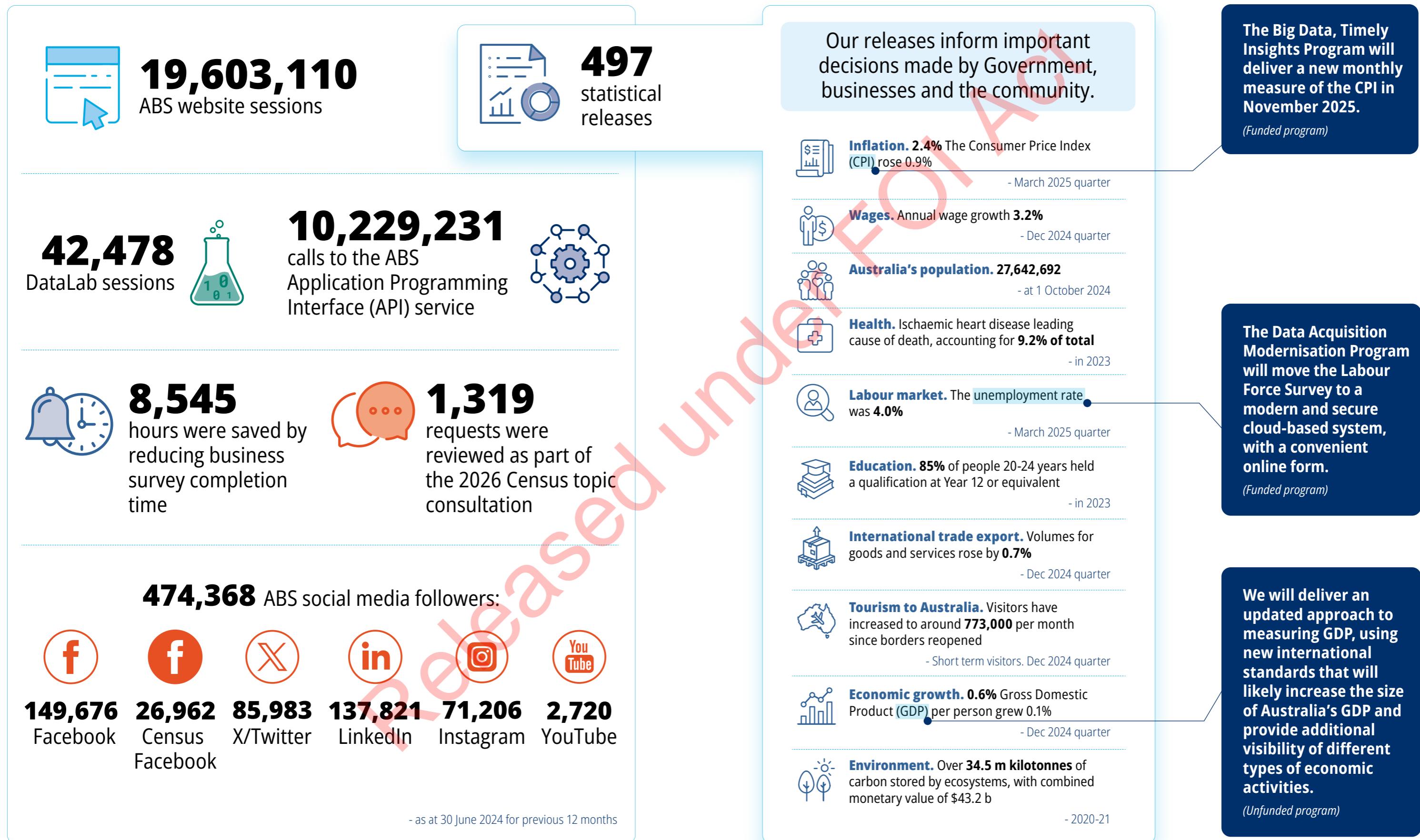


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ABS Executive contacts

The ABS Executive are available to you and your staff to provide information, seek clarification or advice. Contact details are at [Attachment F](#).

Attachment A. ABS at a glance



Attachment B. Our key modernisation initiatives

The ABS is modernising to produce higher quality statistics at lower cost, and with less burden on Australians and their businesses. We are embracing technology to deliver innovation and productivity gains and have committed to reducing our workforce as part of this process. We will continue to innovate to address new statistical challenges and adapt to a changing economic landscape. Our flagship initiatives are the Big Data, Timely Insights Program and the Data Acquisition Modernisation Program.

Big Data, Timely Insights: Phase 2

Big Data, Timely Insights (BDTI) is the ABS' key transformation program. It is into its second phase. The ABS received \$156.3 million over 4 years to deliver BDTI Phase 2, and an additional \$25.3 million over 5 years to rebuild our critical Business Register as part of the Program.

This Program is enabling us to retire old statistical processing IT systems in favour of new cloud technology and modern data tools. Phase 2 will see the CPI and 4 key business statistics migrated onto a new cloud environment. This is a critical step to reduce risks in the production of Australia's key statistics. **S47E**

this Program will allow the ABS to:

- deliver higher quality, more timely statistics and insights, such as the complete monthly CPI
- **S47E**

Data Acquisition Modernisation

Through the Data Acquisition Modernisation (DA Mod) Program, **S47E**

The ABS has received \$97.9 million over 4 years from 2024-25 to deliver the Data Acquisition Modernisation Program, **S47E** This is the first step to modernising our collection services as a whole.

The DA Mod Program is **S47E** to the delivery of timely, accurate and representative statistics for Government and the community. It is:

- adopting a digital-first survey approach, **S47E**
- transforming our contact centre to improve the experience for the community, businesses and our staff
- **S47E**

Attachment C. An integrated view of Australia

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■ Data integration involves combining de-identified data from two or more sources at the unit level (person, business, location) in a secure environment. It allows analysts to derive insights that cannot be derived from one data source alone. Data integration is cost effective, maintains privacy, and reduces the need for the same data to be collected repeatedly from families and businesses.

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S47E Government, research and not-for-profit sectors use this data to generate insights about the economy and the community, including to evaluate the impact of Government policies. S47E

A growing program

The ABS data integration program has expanded significantly over the past 5 years. The Person Level Integrated Data Asset (PLIDA) combines datasets on healthcare, education, government payments, personal income tax, and population. S4 /E

■ The Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE) is a business-centred integrated data asset that combines tax, trade, and intellectual property data with ABS Survey data. S4 /E

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Attachment D. Housing and families

The ABS produces key statistics on housing (e.g. housing values, construction, and finance) and demography (e.g. population, migration, and household composition) critical to decisions on affordable housing. The number of households is projected to increase from 10.0 million in 2021 to between 13.3 and 13.9 million in 2046. The number of families is projected to increase from 7.2 million to between 9.5 and 9.7 million over the same period.

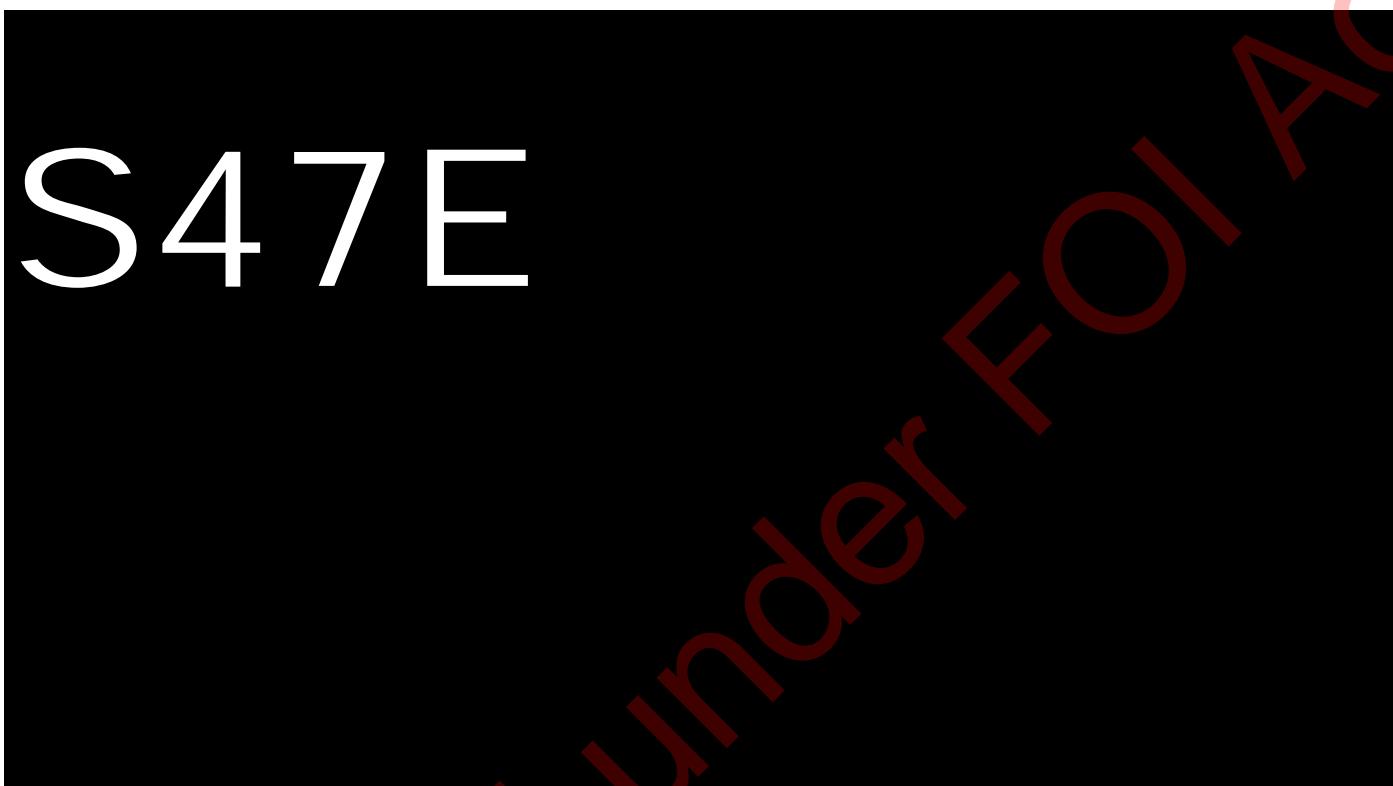
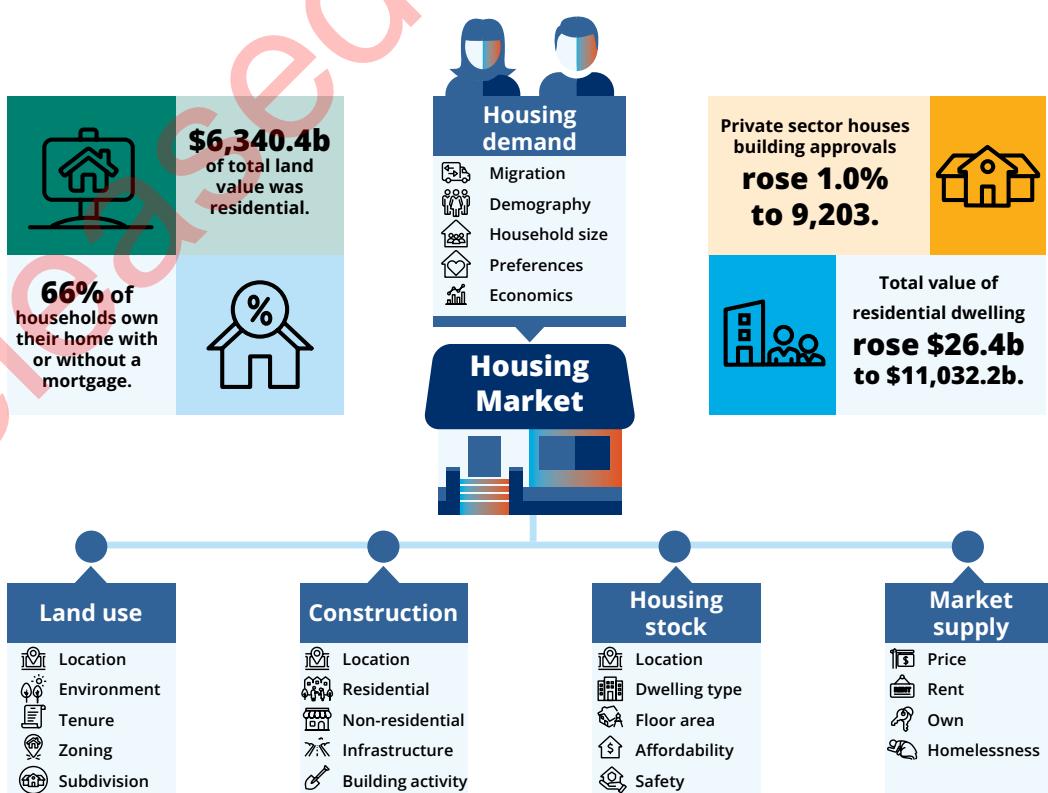


Figure 5 – Key figures and factors for the Australian housing market



Attachment E. Australia's next Census

The Census of Population and Housing (Census) is conducted every five years, with the next Census expected to be confirmed for S4 / E [REDACTED]. The 2026 Census will build on the strong results achieved in 2021.

Value of the Census

The Census produces high quality data that is widely used to inform areas of importance to Australia. It has been estimated to deliver a benefit of \$6 of value to the Australian economy for every \$1 invested², through better services and infrastructure planning, improved policy design, commercial uses and public good.

Collection process

The Census will again take a digital-first approach, S4 / E [REDACTED] (up from 79% in 2021). From late July 2026, most households will receive a letter in the mail with instructions for completing the Census online. People will be encouraged to complete the Census as soon as they receive these instructions if they know where they will be on Census night.

A range of strategies will be in place to encourage high levels of participation across all parts of Australia. Households will be sent reminders to complete the Census and field officers will be in place to follow up with non-responding households and help them participate in their preferred way. For the first time, Australians will be able to register for digital communications and access the Census form through their myGov account.

2026 Census topics

The Australian Government and Parliament determine the topics for each Census. The process for determining the topics for the 2026 Census was completed on 25 March 2025, when the disallowance period ended for the Census and Statistics Regulation 2016. The 2026 Census will include a new topic, 'sexual orientation and gender', for people aged 16 and over.

The ABS determines the wording and layout of questions in the Census. The ABS has announced that it will make improvements to questions for 10 existing topics and introduce two questions for the new topic. There will be a 'prefer not to say' option for the questions on sexual orientation and gender. The final questions for the 2026 Census will be published later this year.

Preparation activities

Census preparation activities for the rest of 2025 include:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- S47E [REDACTED]
- conducting a large-scale public test in August 2025, involving approximately 100,000 households in sample areas across Australia. The primary purpose is to test data collection processes and operational systems to ensure they are ready to deliver a positive, safe and secure Census that is easy to complete. The test will include question wording changes and questions on the new topic of sexual orientation and gender. The myGov pathway for digital communications will also be included in the test.

² Determined in *Valuing the Australian Census*, an independent report conducted by Lateral Economics in 2019,

Attachment F. ABS Executive contacts

Australian Statistician Dr David Gruen AO S22 [REDACTED] david.gruen@abs.gov.au	
INSIGHTS & STATISTICS GROUP S22 Deputy Australian Statistician Brenton Goldsworthy S22 [REDACTED] brenton.goldsworthy@abs.gov.au	DATA & STATISTICAL PRACTICES GROUP S22 Deputy Australian Statistician Phillip Gould S22 [REDACTED] phillip.gould@abs.gov.au
ENTERPRISE SERVICES GROUP S22 Deputy Australian Statistician (Chief Operating Officer, Chief Audit Executive & Chief Risk Officer) Kylie Bryant S22 [REDACTED] kylie.bryant1@abs.gov.au	
Prices & Transformation Division S22 General Manager Liz Williamson S22 [REDACTED] elizabeth.williamson@abs.gov.au	Data Sourcing Division S22 General Manager Nicky Bell S22 [REDACTED] nicky.bell@abs.gov.au
Corporate Services Division S22 General Manager Lane Masterton S22 [REDACTED] Lane.masterton@abs.gov.au	
Economy & Environment Division S22 General Manager Jacqui Vitas S22 [REDACTED] jacqui.vitas@abs.gov.au	Methodology & Data Science Division S22 General Manager (Chief Methodologist) Anders Holmberg S22 [REDACTED] anders.holmberg@abs.gov.au
Technology & Security Division S22 General Manager (Chief Information Officer & Chief Security Officer) Ian Scensor S22 [REDACTED] ian.scensor@abs.gov.au	
People & Place Division S22 General Manager Bindi Kindermann S22 [REDACTED] bindi.kindermann@abs.gov.au	Statistical Infrastructure Division S22 General Manager (Chief Data Officer) Michael Smedes S22 [REDACTED] michael.smedes@abs.gov.au
Census & Population Division S22 General Manager Jenny Telford S22 [REDACTED] jenny.telford@abs.gov.au	Statistical Production & Digital Services Division S22 General Manager Marcel van Kints S22 [REDACTED] marcel.van.kints@abs.gov.au

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Administration Pack

Brief for incoming Government

May 2025

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Legislation.....	3
Role and responsibilities	3
Minister	3
Australian Statistician.....	4
ABS organisation chart	5
ABS Executive Board.....	5
Insights and Statistics Group	6
Data and Statistical Practices Group.....	7
Enterprise Services Group	8
ABS engagement with the Minister and ministerial staff.....	9
Communications with your office.....	9
Market sensitive information	10
Statistical collections tabled in Parliament.....	10
Data requests	11
ABS statistical release calendar.....	11
ABS social media.....	11
Key agency contacts.....	12
ABS Executive Support Team.....	12
ABS Media Team.....	12
ABS Parliamentary Team.....	13
ABS corporate documents	13

Legislation

The primary functions, duties, and powers of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) are set out in the [Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975](#) and the [Census and Statistics Act 1905](#).

- The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* establishes the ABS as an independent statutory authority and legislates its main function as the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and provider of services for state and territory governments.
- The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* empowers the Australian Statistician to collect statistical information on a broad range of demographic, economic, environmental, and social topics and contains strong provisions to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act.
- The [Census and Statistics \(Information Release and Access\) Determination 2018](#) enables the Statistician to release information collected under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* when specific conditions are met.

The ABS must comply with the governance and accountability system defined by the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#). The ABS must also comply with a range of legislation including the [Public Service Act 1999](#), the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#), the [Privacy Act 1988](#), and the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013](#).

Role and responsibilities

Minister

As statistics and their analysis play an important role in policy development and implementation, the ABS will consult you on the ABS work plan or when significant changes to it are considered.

The ABS will provide Treasury portfolio Ministers with accurate and timely advice on significant issues in its core area of business. Significant issues might include:

- matters on which the Government may be called to comment in Parliament or in public
- important ABS operational or budgetary issues
- ABS decisions and actions taken following problems or disruption which may result in substantial revisions to key statistics
- matters for the 2026 Census, such as:
 - amendments to enabling legislation
 - review and approval, and supporting Government approval, of the 2026 Census campaign strategy.

Statistical information to be collected

Where the Minister directs the collection of statistical information under section 9 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* by legislative instrument, the Government expects that the ABS will determine, in accordance with best practice, the methods and procedures for producing this information, and the extent, form and publication of that information. More generally, where the Minister exercises powers of direction, those directions will be given transparently.

Release of information

Section 13 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* provides for the Minister to make determinations providing for the disclosure, with the approval in writing of the Statistician, of information included in a specified class of information furnished in pursuance of that Act. The *Census and Statistics (Information Release and Access) Determination 2018* is such a determination and provides for the disclosure or release of a restricted range of information, including identifiable information about businesses and organisations, under special circumstances.

Information of a personal or domestic nature cannot be disclosed in accordance with a determination in a manner likely to enable the identification of a person. The *Census and Statistics (Information Release and Access) Determination 2018* is due to sunset on October 1, 2028. A review of this instrument will commence in due course.

Australian Statistician

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* set out the primary functions, duties and powers of the ABS. The Australian Statistician¹ controls the operations of the ABS, subject to relevant laws.

The ABS should carry out its functions in a way that:

- ensures it maintains its reputation as a world class statistical agency
- supports and promotes the efficient and effective delivery of official statistics and statistical services for Australia.

Independence and accountability in exercise of functions

The ABS will be cognisant of the Government's key policy objectives and participate, where possible, in initiatives that are directly relevant to the ABS. The ABS will also consider the outcomes or recommendations of relevant Government-established panels, reviews or inquiries.

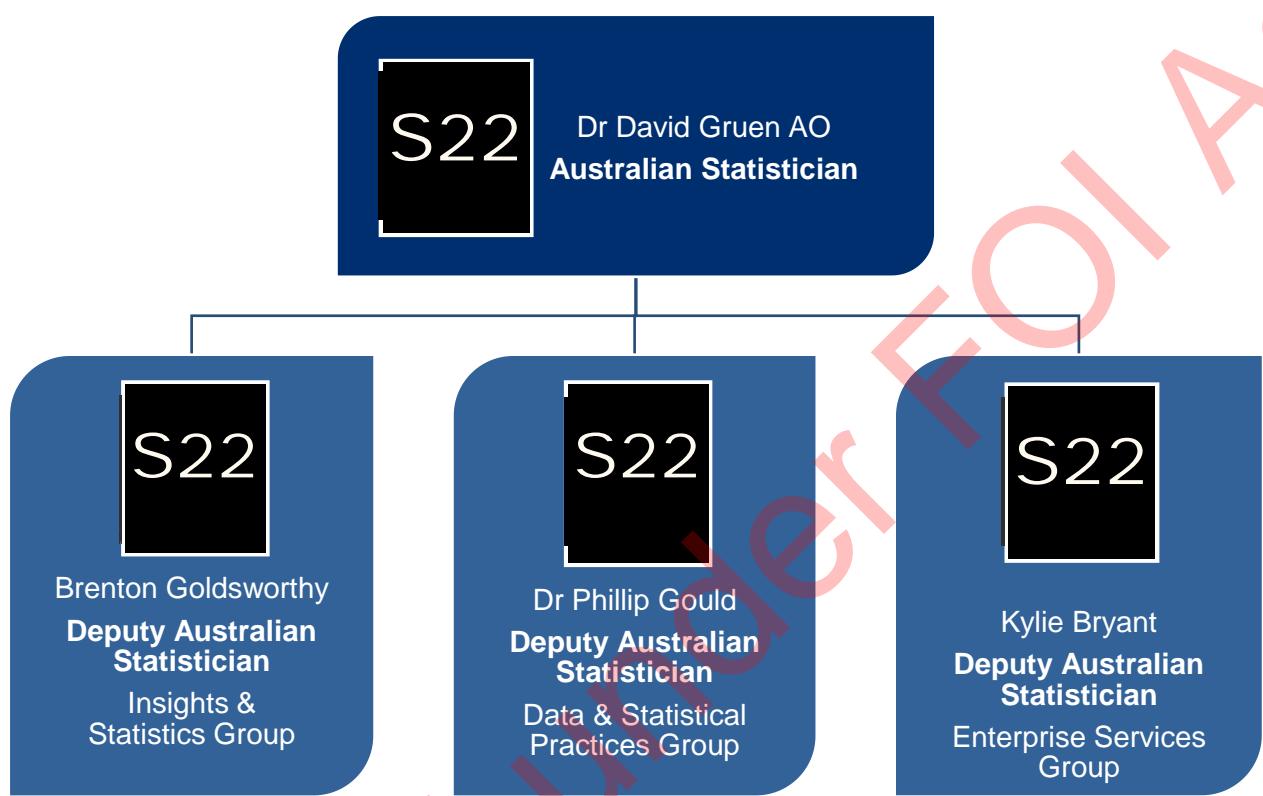
The ABS will be transparent and accountable to its role as the central statistical authority for Australian governments, including through the publication of its corporate plan, forward work program and annual report.

¹ Hereafter, the functions of the Statistician are referred to as those of the ABS.

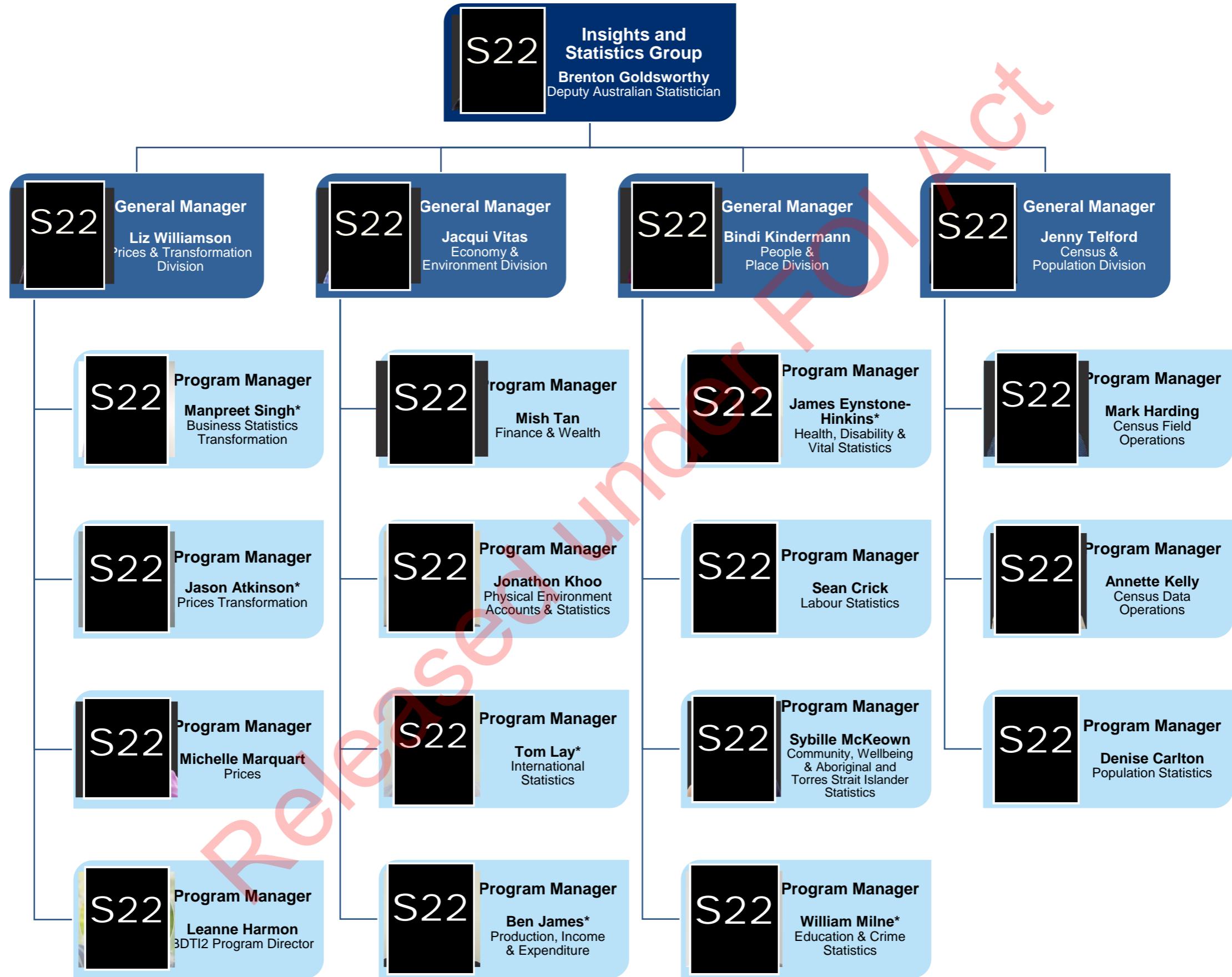
ABS organisation chart

ABS Executive Board

Executive biographies can be found on the [ABS website](#).

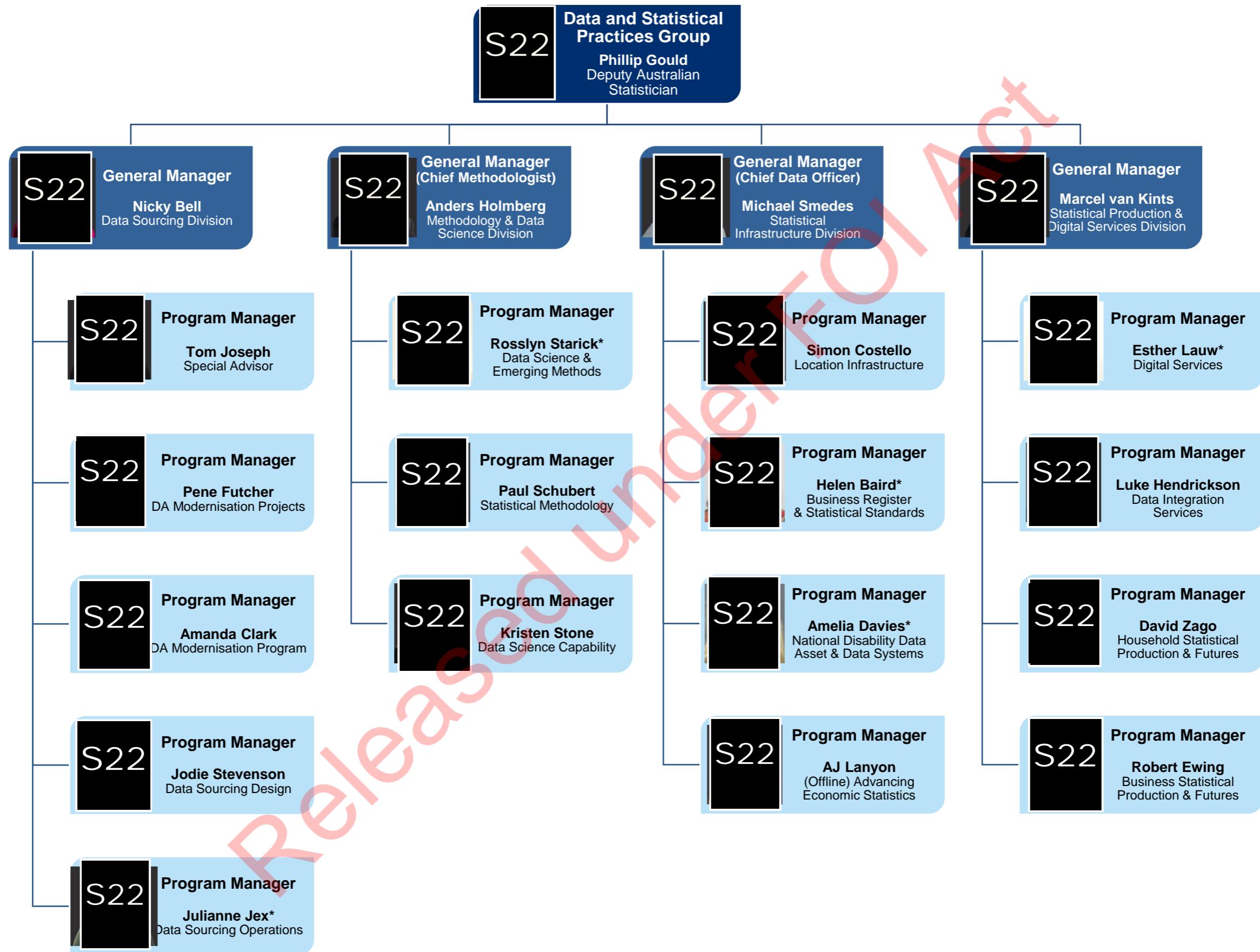


Insights and Statistics Group



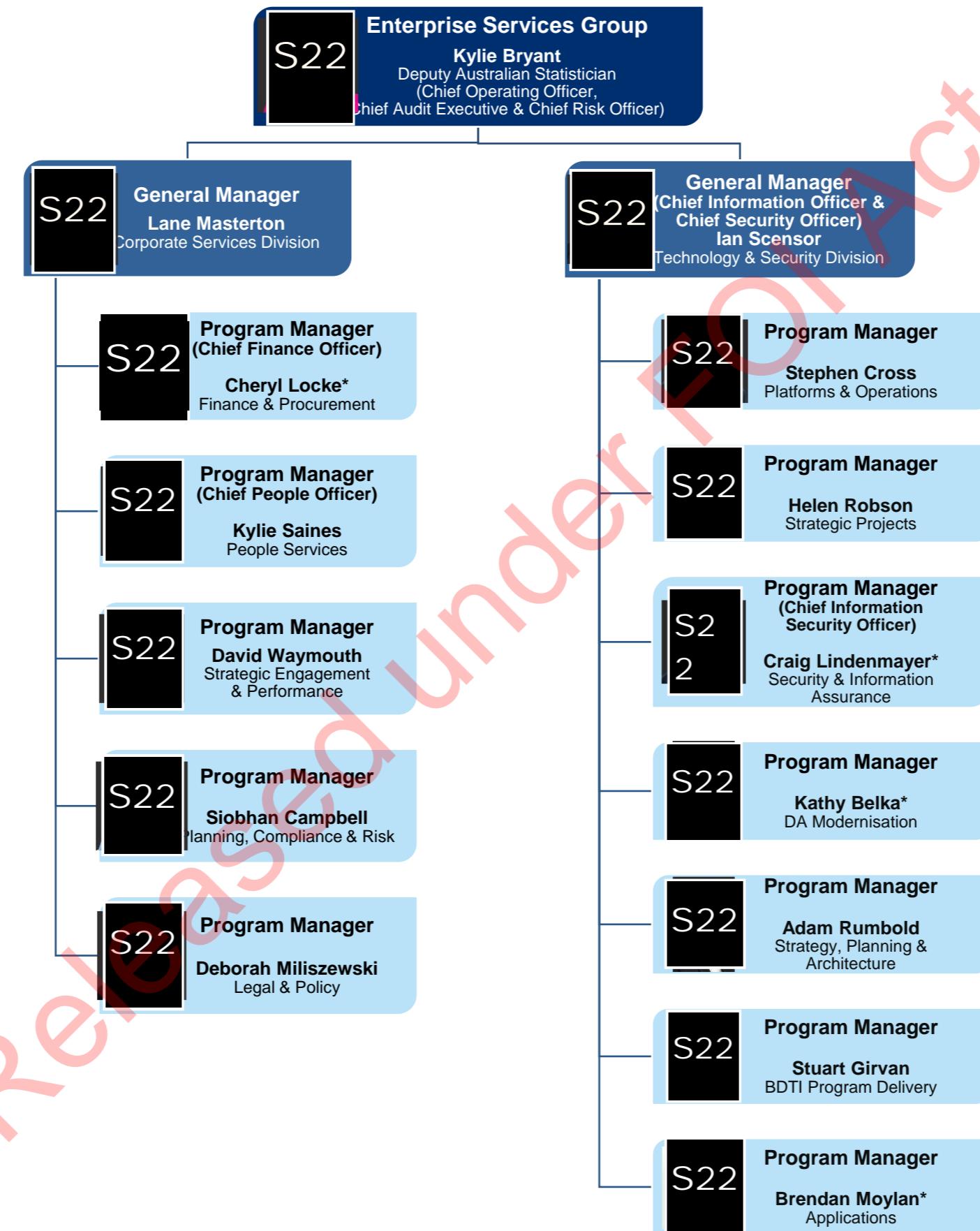
*Individual is acting, temporary or contractor in this role

Data and Statistical Practices Group



*Individual is acting, temporary or contractor in this role

Enterprise Services Group



*Individual is acting, temporary or contractor in this role

ABS engagement with the Minister and ministerial staff

The ABS operates as part of the Australian Government and is accountable to the Parliament, and to the public, through the Treasury Ministers, the Parliamentary Committee process, and the tabling of its annual report.

- The ABS acts independently and objectively in performing its functions and exercising its power as set out in legislation.
- The ABS will annually share the forward work program with you as part of its Corporate Plan before it is published on the ABS website. Where there are any significant changes, you will be consulted separately. The ABS recommends regular engagement with you and your staff and will tailor interactions to meet your preferences.

All ABS Senior Executive Service staff are available to you and your staff to provide information, seek clarification or advice.

Communications with your office

The ABS will liaise with you and your ministerial staff through the mechanisms listed below.

Ministerial briefings

The ABS will provide briefs to ensure we meet our obligations to inform you of key matters,

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Media

The ABS Media Team in the Strategic Engagement and Performance Branch manages all media enquiries and requests for the agency. The Minister's office will be included in regular notifications of upcoming media releases and media opportunities.

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Communications with Department Liaison Officer

Regular liaison occurs between your Department Liaison Officer and the ABS Parliamentary team, on ministerial briefs, information requests, ministerial correspondence, Question Time Briefs, Senate Estimates and Questions on Notice.

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Statistical collections tabled in Parliament

Proposals for new or changed statistical collections will be provided to you, ahead of tabling in both Houses of Parliament. This information is published on the [ABS website](#).

Data requests

The [Parliamentary Library](#) supports Senators and Members of Parliament for statistical information and data requests. If the Parliamentary Library cannot provide this information, they can seek a customised data request through the [ABS Consultancy Service](#), which is a fee for service. Access to ABS data can be found on the ABS website.

A list of free and charged data services can be found at the [ABS website](#).

ABS statistical release calendar

The release calendar shows the expected release dates for statistical products over the next six months. Any changes will be advertised on the ABS website. The release calendar is available on the [ABS website](#).

ABS social media

ABS social media accounts are used to raise awareness of ABS statistical releases, data, surveys and for general interaction with the public and to answer specific statistical queries posed via social media.

The ABS engages with Australian Government agencies on social media and encourages the re-posting of ABS social media content to enable it to reach a wider audience.

Social media accounts:

- [ABS Instagram](#)
- [ABS Facebook](#)
- [ABS X](#)
- [ABS LinkedIn](#)
- [ABS YouTube](#)

Key agency contacts

ABS Executive Support Team

Name	Position	Contact details
S2	Executive Officer to Australian Statistician	S22
2	Executive Assistant to Australian Statistician	
	Executive Assistant to Brenton Goldsworthy	
	Executive Officer to Phillip Gould	
	Executive Assistant to Phillip Gould	
	Executive Officer to Kylie Bryant	
	Executive Assistant to Kylie Bryant	

ABS Media Team

Email: media@abs.gov.au

Name	Position	Contact details
David Waymouth	Program Manager, Strategic Engagement and Performance Branch	S22 S22 david.waymouth@abs.gov.au
S22	Director, Media and Social Media	S22
	A/g Media Manager	

S2	Media Officer	S22
	Media Officer	
	Media Officer	
	Social Media Manager	
	Communication Manager, Planning Team	

ABS Parliamentary Team

Email: parliamentary@abs.gov.au

Name	Position	Contact details
David Waymouth	Program Manager, Strategic Engagement and Performance Branch	S22 Mob: S22 david.waymouth@abs.gov.au
	A/g Director, Parliamentary Team	
	Senior Parliamentary Officer	
	Parliamentary Officer, Cabinet Liaison Officer	
	Parliamentary Officer, Cabinet Liaison Officer	

ABS corporate documents

[Australian Bureau of Statistics Annual Report 2023-24](#)

[ABS Corporate Plan 2024–2025](#)

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