

Retail Trade MEI WDB
Sent by Roberto Urzua

07/05/2012 11:11 AM

Send	To craig.james@cba.com.au cc
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Subject	Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (Commsec)Notes Link
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Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
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Categories	29. March 2012 Client Requests
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Visibility	Public
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Editors	Alan Lambert/Staff/ABS
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Last modified	07/05/2012 04:33:44 PM By Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
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Document Id	RURA-8U32VZ
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Edit Log	07/05/2012 10:43:40 AM; Roberto Urzua: Document created.
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Dear Craig,

Attached is your requested data for Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012.

(section 12(1)(c))

Alan Lambert
Retail Trade
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Ph: 02 9268 4505

Retail Trade MEI WDB
Sent by Roberto Urzua

07/05/2012 11:12 AM

Send	To: justin.ganly@deependservices.com.au cc
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Subject	Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (Deep End Services) Notes Link
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Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
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Categories	29. March 2012 Client Requests
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Visibility	Public
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Editors	Alan Lambert/Staff/ABS
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Last modified	07/05/2012 04:34:23 PM By: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
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Document Id	RURA-8U32U2
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Edit Log	07/05/2012 10:40:32 AM; Roberto Urzua: Document created.
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Dear Justin,

Attached is your requested data for Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012.

(section 12(1)(c))

Alan Lambert
Retail Trade
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Ph: 02 9268 4505

Retail Trade MEI WDB
Sent by Roberto Urzua

07/05/2012 11:11 AM

Send	To jbacken@urbis.com.au cc
Subject	Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (URBISHHD)Notes Link
Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
Categories	29. March 2012\Client Requests
Visibility	Public
Editors	Alan Lambert/Staff/ABS
Last modified	07/05/2012 04:34:11 PM By Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Document Id	RURA-8U32UU
Edit Log	07/05/2012 10:41:50 AM; Roberto Urzua: Document created.

Dear Jack,

Attached is your requested data for Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012.

(section 12 (1)(c))

Alan Lambert
Retail Trade
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Ph: 02 9268 4505

Retail Trade MEI WDB
Sent by Roberto Urzua

07/05/2012 11:11 AM

Send	To: Sarah.Wang@yum.com, Cameron.Fincher@yum.com, Glenda.Vasco@yum.com cc:
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Subject	Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (YUM)Notes Link
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Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
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Categories	29-March-2012/Client Requests
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Visibility	Public
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Editors	Alan Lambert/Staff/ABS
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Last modified	07/05/2012 04:35:14 PM By Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
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Document Id	RURA-8U32SV
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Edit Log	07/05/2012 10:38:38 AM: Roberto Urzua: Document created.
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Dear Sarah,

Attached is your requested data for Retail Trade, Australia - March 12.

(section 12 (1)(c))

Alan Lambert
Retail Trade
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Ph: 02 9268 4505

Retail Trade MEI WDB
Sent by Roberto Urzua

07/05/2012 11:11 AM

Send	To: michael.goltsman@citi.com, craig.woolford@citi.com cc:
Subject	Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (Citigroup)Notes Link
Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
Categories	29. March 2012 Client Requests
Visibility	Public
Editors	Alan Lambert/Staff/ABS
Last modified	07/05/2012 04:33:29 PM By: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Document Id	RURA-8U32WG
Edit Log	07/05/2012 10:44:27 AM: Roberto Urzua; Document created.

Dear Michael and Craig,

Attached is your requested data for Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012.

(section 12(1)(c))

Alan Lambert
Retail Trade
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Ph: 02 9268 4505

From: Trevor Sutton/Staff/ABS
To: Merry Branson/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 04:13 PM
Subject: Fw: Detailed incident report - retail trade [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]

Hi Merry

see below, we have dealt with this in the short term, however, need to review and see what can be done to stop this happening in the future. I think you should be involved with drafting a terms of reference, lets talk

regards

Trevor

----- Forwarded by Trevor Sutton/Staff/ABS on 07/05/2012 04:01 PM -----

From: Michael Davies/Staff/ABS
To: Trevor Sutton/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 03:16 PM
Subject: Fw: Detailed incident report - retail trade [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]

FYI

MD

----- Forwarded by Michael Davies/Staff/ABS on 07/05/2012 03:16 PM -----

From: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS
To: Michael Davies/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS, Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 02:44 PM
Subject: Detailed incident report - retail trade [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]

Details of of pre-embargo release incident

Approximate 10:45am this morning, the client request spreadsheets were finalised by Angus Bristow (current APS6 managing Retail) and checked by Alan Lambert.

This month, Roberto Urzua was taking charge of sending out the client requests. A series of emails were prepared for six external client requests.

The recipients include: Citigroup; Commsec; **(withheld)**; Deep End Services; Urbis; and Yum.

Just after 11am Roberto asked Angus about the spreadsheets that were required to be attached to the prepared emails. He was advised by Angus as to which spreadsheets to use and told him that once attached he should save the emails and then send them separately. Angus did not specify the embargo time.

Some point after this, Roberto clarified which email to use for the YUM request.

It appears that Roberto misunderstood the instruction and between 11:11am and 11:12am he attached the spreadsheets and sent out the emails instead of just saving the spreadsheets.

The information contained within the individual client requests vary but all have data as to the performance of Retail trade in the current month and the spreadsheets for Urbis, Commsec, (withheld) and Citigroup all contained seasonally adjusted data and sufficient information from which the headline seasonally adjusted and volume movements can be derived.

At approximately 11:25 am, Angus became aware of the incident when Alan raised it with him as a result of a discussion between Roberto and Alan. Angus then immediately reported the incident to Neel Tikaram (current EL1 responsible for Retail).

Subsequently, Roberto received an acknowledgement from Commsec at 11:27am thanking him for the client data.

The release does not appear to have moved the stock market. Stock prices fell on opening, rose slightly at around 10.30 am but then fell before 11.00 am. The prices remained relatively stable between 11.00 am and 11.30 am but with a very slight rise at 11.30 am. Prices have continued to decline since then

There was a slight movement in the Australian dollar at 11.15 am but it fell back prior to the release of the data at 11.30 am. The Sydney Morning Herald (online) reported that the Australian dollar rose slightly after the release of better than expected building and retail data, "the local currency was trading at 101.12 US cents at 1129 AEST just before the data was released, and rose to 101.32 US cents by 1134 AEST".

The Commsec client request is sent to Craig James who is their chief economist. Commsec often releases analytical briefs on the economy which uses ABS as one of their key data sources. (section 22). There is a risk that Commsec could comment on the early release of retail data through their analytical briefs which. The BSC will keep a close watch on any upcoming releases by Commsec.

The BSC will undertake a full review of the circumstances that lead to the early release of the data with the view of avoiding any future incidents of this nature.

Paul Williams
Regional Director

New South Wales | Australian Bureau of Statistics

(P) (02) 9268 4236 (F) (02) 9268 4445

(E) paul.williams@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

From: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS
To: Michael Davies/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS, Didier Rive/Staff/ABS@ABS
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(P) (02) 9268 4236 (F) (02) 9268 4445

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From: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 02:46 PM
Subject: Fw: Detailed incident report - retail trade [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]

Neel - this differs in detail from your original and follows a conversation I had Roberto to clarify the timing of his discussions with Angus and when he received the Comsec notification.

Could you please amend the report on the database to reflect this.

Paul Williams
Regional Director

New South Wales | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

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(E) paul.williams@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au <mailto:your.address@abs.gov.au>

----- Forwarded by Paul Williams/Staff/ABS on 07/05/2012 02:44 PM -----

From: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS
To: Michael Davies/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS, Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 02:44 PM
Subject: Detailed incident report - retail trade [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]

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Paul Williams
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New South Wales | Australian Bureau of Statistics

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From: Merry Branson/Staff/ABS
To: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 02:53 PM
Subject: Re: release incident 7/5

Hi Didier, I hope your staff member is not sick because of this incident. We have to handle our young person sensitively too. In the end it is not their fault as such, there are always many contributing factors. What is important is we all pause and learn from things like this.

Thanks Merry

Merry Branson

Assistant Statistician (Branch Head)

Customer Services Branch | ABS 2017 Program Delivery Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

☎ +61 2 6252 6353 ☎ 0407 952 606

☎ merry.branson@abs.gov.au ☎ www.abs.gov.au

From: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS
To: Merry Branson/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 02:44 PM
Subject: Re: release incident 7/5

Hi Merry,

Thanks for the information you provided it is very helpful. The primary staff member involved has taken the rest of the week off on sick leave so I will instigate the counselling on his return.

Regards
Didier

From: Merry Branson/Staff/ABS
To: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Ben Dorber/Staff/ABS@ABS, Angus Bristow/Staff/ABS@ABS, Todd Sweeting/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 01:15 PM
Subject: release incident 7/5

Hi guys, I have just met with Trevor Sutton and Michael Davies and we have worked out a way forward. We have an Audit underway of release management and I have approached Oakton the auditors to extend this audit and clearly document this incident as part of the audit findings which will satisfy Brian's promise to have the incident fully investigated.

The existing audit already contained recommendations that any 11:30am releases be centralised with Web Publishing and that any other data on release day be strictly controlled and not release until after the publishing window was closed at 2pm on the day of release. **(section 22)** CSB will be responsible for redrafting a new policy outlining this and getting that endorsed by SMG.

Could I ask that you undertake the same counselling in your section (**section 22**)

This recommendation requires that managers explicitly tell staff they are being counselled and explicitly write this into follow or confirmatory email to the staff member.

So can I ask you to provide some formal counselling and explicitly write this into follow or confirmatory email to the staff members.

This counselling should cover ABS core values (Corporate Plan access to all) and the release and embargo policies:

Notes Link (Subject: Policy and Legislation Manual > Security > Security Policy Guidelines > Guidelines on Processing and Release of MEIs; Database: ABS Corporate Manuals; Author: Bryan Hogan; Created: 20/11/2001)

Notes Link (Subject: Publishing: Standards and Guidelines Manual > Packaging of physical products > Information placed on packaging > Embargo statement; Database: ABS Corporate Manuals; Author: Paula Sutherland; Created: 08/11/1996)

Let me know if you need any help from us on this aspect.

Thanks Merry

Merry Branson

Assistant Statistician (Branch Head)

Customer Services Branch | ABS 2017 Program Delivery Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

☎ +61 2 6252 6353 ☎ 0407 952 606

☎ merry.branson@abs.gov.au ☎ www.abs.gov.au

From: Angus Bristow/Staff/ABS
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 02:20 PM
Subject: Fw: release incident 7/5

I have only skimmed this, assume it is something we should discuss tomorrow.

Angus Bristow

A/g Manager - Retail Business Survey

Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys | NSW Office | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 9268 4308

(E) angus.bristow@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

----- Forwarded by Angus Bristow/Staff/ABS on 08/05/2012 02:20 PM -----

From: Merry Branson/Staff/ABS
To: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Ben Dorber/Staff/ABS@ABS, Angus Bristow/Staff/ABS@ABS, Todd Sweeting/Staff/ABS@ABS
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Merry Branson

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Customer Services Branch | ABS 2017 Program Delivery Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**
☎ +61 2 6252 6353 ☎ 0407 952 606
☎ merry.branson@abs.gov.au ☎ www.abs.gov.au

From: Angus Bristow/Staff/ABS
To: Retail Trade MEI WDB@ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 08:43 AM
Subject: Re: Notification: Retail trade pre-embargo release incident - summary [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]

Thanks Neel,

Good write up do you have a preference for when you would like me to go ahead and organise the first team meeting to debrief and commence the review of procedures?

I have some initial thoughts which include an audit of our current processes, identifying which ones are properly documented and which ones such as the client requests which have systems process documentation but not a full procedural documentation and start work on updating those accordingly.

Cheers,
Angus Bristow

A/g Manager - Retail Business Survey

Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys | NSW Office | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 9268 4308

(E) angus.bristow@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

From: Retail Trade MEI WDB
To: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS@ABS, Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 02:11 PM
Subject: Notification: Retail trade pre-embargo release incident - summary [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]
Sent by: Neel Tikaram

Paul,

Please find attached, a summary incident report.

Let me know if you require any clarification or any additional information.

Thank you for your assistance.

Regards,

Neel

STATISTICS-IN-CONFIDENCE

Protective Mark	STATISTICS-IN-CONFIDENCE
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Categories	29-March-2012Publication
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Visibility	Limited Readers
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Editors	Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
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Readers	Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
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Document Usage	General Operations - determines recordkeeping action
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Document Id	NTIM-8U35X6
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Edit Log	07/05/2012 01:19:34 PM; Neel Tikaram; Document created.
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Summary of pre-embargo release incident

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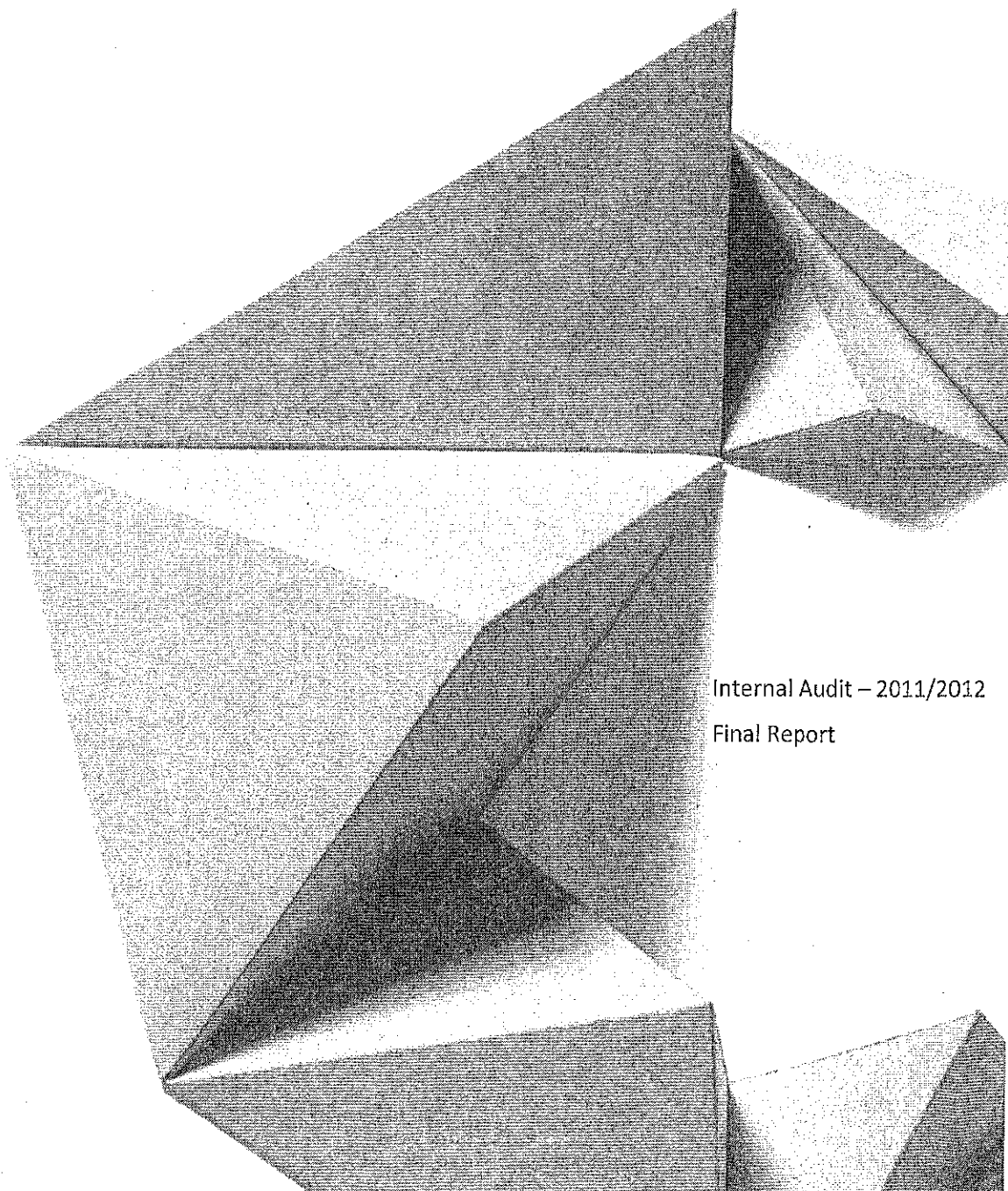
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The BSC will also undertake a full debrief within the team and review current procedures with the aim of improving processes and to implement strategies to mitigate risks associated with the publication and client request release process.

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Release Management



Internal Audit – 2011/2012
Final Report

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

This audit of Release Management was undertaken as part of the Internal Audit Program for 2011/12. The fieldwork was conducted in November and December 2011.

The audit was added to the Internal Audit program following an incident where embargoed Trade data was released early.

1.2 Audit Objectives

ABS policy is to release publications and associated data to clients and public only at agreed dates and times. This is important to ensure equity of access to that information.

The objective of the audit was to assess the adequacy of release management controls, whether they are being adhered to and to identify any opportunities for improvement.

1.3 Audit Scope

The audit was limited to examining practices associated with the release of publication information to the public.

For the purposes of this audit, 'release management' has been defined as the release of embargoed material at the 11:30am release time.

Information is released in a number of different ways, both electronically and in hardcopy. For every publication multiple teams are involved in its release.

The audit did not examine other aspects of release management such as quality controls.

1.4 Audit Methodology

The audit approach was to:

- Review the formal Release Management policy to identify mandatory and desirable controls;
- Select a sample of publications (including both MEI and non-MEI publications, and a selection of Central Office and regional teams) and;
 - Identify - through interviews, review of documentation and, where possible, observation of actual releases - the staff practices for each selected publication;
 - Identify methods of release and associated controls;
- Analyse and compare observed practices with policy requirements to identify issues; and
- Identify root causes of issues where possible.

The audit examined a sample of five Main Economic Indicator (MEI) and five non MEI publications across both the Central Office and four regional offices.

1.5 Conclusion

Currently release of embargoed material at 11:30am on the release date is not controlled by a single team. While the bulk of material is managed under tight control by the Web Publishing team, subject matter areas are also releasing some embargoed material themselves.

The audit found that the greatest risk of an unauthorised release of embargoed material arises from material being released by teams other than the Web Publishing team.

There is a detailed policy framework in place to guide the release of publications. However, the audit found that there could be stronger controls to ensure all methods of release only occur at the agreed 11:30am release time.

The current policy framework outlines dissemination requirements, such as publicising release dates, release approvals, managing pre-embargo publications and loading website content. Staff interviewed demonstrated an awareness and understanding of the release management policy requirements. However, much of the policy material is dated, and the key controls are spread across multiple documents and chapters within those documents.

There is no policy which requires that embargoed material for release at 11:30am should be centrally controlled. This unnecessarily exposes the ABS to risk as it significantly increases the numbers of staff who might release embargoed material, many of them who may only do this occasionally and not in a well-controlled manner.

Clearly separating material for the 11:30am release from other associated material (such as customised data and subscriptions) and having the 11:30am release tightly controlled would significantly reduce the risk of unauthorised release.

(Section 22)

The key findings and recommendations of this audit are:

- The risk of unauthorised releases can be significantly reduced by making the Web Publishing team solely responsible for controlling the release of embargoed material at 11:30am.
 - Material currently being released by other teams at 11:30am should be reviewed and responsibility for release handed over to Web Publishing.
 - Related material which does not need to be released at 11:30am should be identified as such and not released until some hours later.
- As part of this policy change, Web Publishing should remind all subject matter areas of the important controls for protecting embargoed material.
- The relevant policy documents should be reviewed and updated to make them more relevant, easier to follow and to enforce the requirement that all 11:30 releases are controlled by Web Publishing.

Following the issuing of this report as a draft in March 2012, there was a further incident of early release of embargoed data. This incident is described at page 13. Had the recommendations in this report already been implemented, then this incident could have been avoided.

2. BACKGROUND

(section 22)

The release and dissemination phase

This phase is conducted by various work areas. The Web Publishing Team obtains the finalised products from the WCA and prepares them for publication on the ABS website (includes upload to servers). To ensure impartiality and integrity of ABS statistics, it is a core requirement that all statistical releases are available on the ABS website at 11.30am on the day of their release. Prior to 11.30am, all statistics are treated as confidential and regarded as 'under embargo'. At 11.30am on the day of release, the publication is made 'live' on the ABS website for access by users.

The Printing team prepares hardcopy publications for distribution for particular clients e.g. Parliament House. The team is also responsible for delivery of publications to those clients, typically by staff courier.

Some author areas (BSCs) make the publication available to major clients via emails which are prepared in advance and submitted at the stipulated time of release.

The Lockup service provides physical access to embargoed material for selected government clients just before the 11.30am release time in a contained and carefully controlled environment. A similar service is provided in the New South Wales regional office for a group of media organisations.

Once a publication has been released, the post release process seeks to ensure that the materials released are free of errors and omissions. Additionally, supplementary information to the original publication may be subsequently released (and may be subject to the same release management process where this is necessary).

Quality checks are performed at multiple points during the pre-release, release and post-release phases by both the author areas (in terms of content) and Web Publishing (in terms of look and feel).

3. AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Policy and procedural framework for release of publications and data

Findings

- While the physical release of the bulk of embargoed material is managed by the Web Publishing team, the current policy allows other teams, such as the responsible author areas and the Client Services team, to also release embargoed material.
- The current policies for Release Management are complicated, spread over multiple documents and some parts are quite dated.
- The policy framework is not adequately supported by controls which would ensure consistent application of the policy requirements across author areas.
- Staff consultations revealed general awareness of the end-to-end Release Management process.

Discussion

There are a number of corporate policies and guidelines underpinning the end-to-end Release Management process including:

- Preparation responsibility, product consistency and data quality;
- Confidentiality;
- Peer review;
- Pre-embargo access and access to embargoed material for launch preparation;
- Release approvals;
- Publicising release dates;
- MEI, OLI and non-MEI release schedules;
- Release of statistics and related information;
- Data dissemination and loading content to the ABS website;
- Corporate communications (including issue of media releases); and
- Corrections and communicating changes to MEI and OLI publications.

The policies and associated procedures, which are available via the Corporate Manuals, articulate the requirements for relevant staff to ensure timely release with appropriate access to pre-embargo data.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR RELEASE

While author areas are clearly responsible for authorising the release of material, there is no policy direction on which teams may physically release embargoed material, though responsibility for release of material to the ABS website lies with the Web Publishing team.

As is described in the following sections, there are a number of different methods of release and material is being released by multiple author areas in addition to the Web Publishing team.

The current practices of allowing multiple teams to release embargoed material at 11:30am increases the risk of an unintentional release of material prior to 11:30am on the official release date.

- The Web Publishing team has tight controls and staff are regularly releasing material so are well aware of the need to take care and to follow their formal release procedures.
- Author areas release material less frequently. There are far more staff who could potentially release material in an email, and the release procedures are not consistent across teams and may not be sufficiently rigorous.

The risk of an unintentional release of embargoed material can be significantly reduced by centralising the release of the material to a single team.

RELEASE PRACTICES

There is not sufficient detailed guidance in the policy on the controls that should be in place to ensure that there are no mishaps with the 11:30am release. As a result, the actual release practices followed by author areas, when they release material themselves, differ from team to team.

For instance, there is no indication as to how changes to release dates should be managed or communicated to relevant team members in order to ensure their awareness and prevent non-timely release. Similarly, release practices via email are not prescribed in policy documentation resulting in differing approaches taken by various teams.

Related controls to these practices are covered in greater detail in other sections of this report.

USEABILITY OF THE RELEASE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The important policy requirements for release management are spread across a number of different documents in the Corporate Manual and some of them have not been updated for a long time.

The Publishing Policy is still focussed on the printing and physical release of hardcopy publications. This is no longer relevant as there is very little physical printing and the vast majority of material is released electronically through the website, email and on electronic media.

The policies relevant to Release Management should be reviewed and updated.

Exposure

There is a potential for different author areas, in applying their unique release practices, to adopt an approach that is inconsistent with the intention of the policy requirements and for errors to be made particularly in terms of:

- release date; and
- email release to clients.

This risk can be significantly reduced by centralising the release of all material for 11:30am and assigning the responsibility to the Web Publishing team.

Recommendation 1	Allocate the responsibility for controlling the release of material at 11:30am to a single central team, the Web Publishing team.
Rating	High
Recommendation 2	Review and update the policies associated with release management to ensure they reflect current practices and required controls.
Rating	Moderate
Recommendation 3	<p>If the 11:30am release of material continues to be decentralised with author areas releasing some material then implement improved controls for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensuring that changes in release dates are well publicised and staff are aware of the change. ■ Emailing material at 11:30am.
Rating	High

3.2 Methods of Release

Findings

- There are processes in place to ensure that publications released via the website are released only at the agreed time of 11:30am on the day of release.
- The processes for email release of publications have not been standardised across author areas and teams.
- Lock ups are managed in an appropriate and security conscious manner.

Discussion

There are multiple methods for releasing embargoed material at 11:30am. These are:

Method	Comparative Risk
■ Publishing to the ABS Website	Low
■ Release of material by email	High
■ Release of material on CDs and USB drives	Medium
■ Physical printing of publications and delivery to a small number of clients	Low
■ Provision of hardcopy and electronic material prior to 11:30am under strict control in a secure environment ('lockups' and the Wires service).	Low

The risks associated with each method vary and are discussed in the rest of this section.

(section 22)

Other Electronic release

Outside of website release of publications, the following areas also release products in alternative formats. Author areas (including Client Services) may release publications via email, hardcopy or on CD;

Some author areas routinely prepare emails containing the to-be-released publication with the intention to 'send' these to selected clients at the 11:30am release time. The practices for how these emails are prepared and stored to prevent inadvertent early submission can vary from one author area to another. For instance, some author areas do not enter sender details until a few minutes prior to release time while others may have the complete email ready to be sent but saved as a draft until the embargo is lifted.

Inconsistent email practices increases the risk of inadvertently distributing publications before the embargo is lifted (as has previously occurred). It also increases the risk that the 11:30am release time may not be strictly adhered to.

As discussed previously, consideration should be given to centralising the release of this material and at the same time introducing better controls over the email releases.

If author areas are to continue to be allowed to email material at 11:30am, then improved and consistent practices should be introduced for the use of emails, which minimise an inadvertent release.

(section 22)

No recommendations are made in this section.

3.3 Controls

Findings

- There are controls defined in the Release Management and associated Publications policies. These are generally understood and followed by author areas, though there are some inconsistencies.

There are areas of weakness such as the lack a prescribed method for releasing material by email.

(Section 22)

Processes in place for producing outputs

Author areas, including Client Services, have ultimate responsibility for creating releasable outputs with the latter team catering for clients requiring products customised to their needs. The Dissemination Unit in Central Office is responsible for creating and formatting the final publication into the relevant format (i.e. PDF, webpages, MS Excel tables and hardcopy print versions). The Dissemination Unit therefore plays an integral enabling role in preparing final outputs.

All author areas interviewed for this audit were aware of the role and purpose of the Dissemination Unit in ensuring the release is formatted correctly and that a similar look and feel is used for all releases. All author areas (with the exception of Business Indicators Australia based in the NSW Regional Office) utilise the services of the Dissemination Unit in preparation of the final release output.¹

Centralising outputs for all Central Office releases enables consistency of final outputs through oversight by an expert business area.

(Section 22)

Exposure

The controls defined in the relevant policy are important in reducing the risk of breaches. However, they are only effective if the responsible teams are aware of them and actively enforce them

¹ The Business Indicators Australia team in the NSW Regional Office prepares its own final release outputs as it does not have a centralised function for this purpose. However, there is minimal risk associated with the practice as access to pre-embargo data is restricted within the author area.

Recommendation 4	Remind all author areas and Client Services of the important controls set out in ABS policy for handling embargoed material. This could be done as part of the transition to a single team being responsible for the 11:30 release of all material.
Rating	Moderate

(section 22)

3.4 Early Release of Retail Trade Data on 7th May 2012

Findings

- There was early release of embargoed Retail Trade data on 7th May.

Discussion

Following the release of this audit report as a draft in March 2012, there was a further incident of early release of embargoed data. This incident related to data being sent to consultancy customers some twenty minutes prior to the official 11:30am release time.

The usual procedure in the team for disseminating Retail Trade data to consultancy customers is to:

- Prepare email text in advance and have the emails ready in the WDB.
- Prepare the data spreadsheets and have these checked.
- Attach the spreadsheets to the emails prior to 11:30 and resave in the WDB.
- Add email addresses to the individual emails and send them at 11:30.

On the 7th May the following incident happened.

- An APS4 had previously been allocated the responsibility for preparing and sending the emails to the consultancy customers.
- Other staff members had separately prepared and checked the data spreadsheets.
- The spreadsheets were given to the APS4 by an APS6, who is fairly new to the team.
- The APS6 explained which spreadsheets went to which customers.
- The APS6 did not clarify the time that the emails were to be sent as he took it for granted that the importance of the 11:30 release time was well understood by all ABS staff.
- The APS4 team member understood that he had been instructed to send the emails once the spreadsheets had been attached, so he sent the emails rather than resaving them into the WDB for later sending at 11:30
- As a result the emails went out some 20 minutes early.

The early release was caused by the APS4 not having sufficient understanding of the importance of the 11:30 release time. Even if instructed to send the emails early, ABS staff should object as the expectation is that all staff understand the importance of not releasing embargoed material prior to the release time.

(section 22)

Attachment A - ACTION SHEET

Audit Recommendation	Rating	Mgt Position	Responsible Officer	Management Comment	Estimated Completion Date
1. Allocate the responsibility for controlling the release of material at 11:30am to a single central team, the Web Publishing team.	High	Agreed	AS CSB	Paper to be submitted to SMG recommending that all 11.30am releases are completed by WPS	31 July 2012
2. Review and update the policies associated with release management to ensure they reflect current practices and required controls.	Moderate	Agreed	Director WPS	WPS will need to complete a review as a project. A draft of some new policy would form part of the SMG paper above	30 Sep 2012
3. If the 11:30am release of material continues to be decentralised with author areas releasing some material then implement improved controls for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensuring that changes in release dates are well publicised and staff are aware of the change. ■ Emailing material at 11:30am. 	High	Agreed	Director WPS	This recommendation is dependent on the outcome of the actions from recommendation 1. In either case, WPS will be responsible for the communication and education to SMAs.	Post June 2012
4. Remind all author areas and Client Services of the important controls set out in ABS policy for handling embargoed material. This could be done as part of the transition to a single team being responsible for the 11:30 release of all material.	Moderate	Agreed	Director WPS Director Security	Also dependent on outcome of recommendation 1. WPS will be responsible for the communication and education to SMAs.	30 June 2012

Audit Recommendation	Rating	Mgt Position	Responsible Officer	Management Comment	Estimated Completion Date
5. (section 22)					
6. (section 22)					

(section 22)

Consulting Technology



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From: Merry Branson/Staff/ABS
To: Tom Hughes <tom.hughes@oakton.com.au>
Cc: "todd.sweeting@abs.gov.au" <todd.sweeting@abs.gov.au>, Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 12:55 PM
Subject: RE: draft audit report on Release Management

Thanks Tom, yes just an interview or two would be needed. The pre-release happened out of the Retail Trade area which is in our Sydney office. Didier Rivet in the cc above is the Director there (02) 9268 4900.

And yes I have time put aside today to work on finalising the management comments. Trevor and Michael also thought we should change some of the recommendations from medium to high given the circumstances.

Thanks Merry

Merry Branson

Assistant Statistician (Branch Head)

Customer Services Branch | ABS 2017 Program Delivery Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

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☎ merry.branson@abs.gov.au ☎ www.abs.gov.au

From: Tom Hughes <tom.hughes@oakton.com.au>
To: Merry Branson <merry.branson@abs.gov.au>
Cc: Cherie Whitby <cherie.whitby@oakton.com.au>, "Danielle Smith (danielle.smith@abs.gov.au)" <danielle.smith@abs.gov.au>, "John D Moore (john.moore@abs.gov.au)" <john.moore@abs.gov.au>, "Michael Meagher (michael.meagher@abs.gov.au)" <michael.meagher@abs.gov.au>, Rachel Ren <rachel.ren@abs.gov.au>, "todd.sweeting@abs.gov.au" <todd.sweeting@abs.gov.au>, Marcel van Kints <marcel.van.kints@abs.gov.au>
Date: 08/05/2012 10:54 AM
Subject: RE: draft audit report on Release Management [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Merry

I don't see why this can't be done. (I think your management comments are still outstanding so the report is not yet final.)

I presume that all that will be required is one or two quick interviews and the results can be added as an additional section in the report.

If you can point me in the right direction, I will go and interview the staff involved. I will be in ABS House for other meetings Thursday afternoon and Friday morning and it would be best to do this now and get it out of the way.

Tom

From: Merry Branson [mailto:merry.branson@abs.gov.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 8 May 2012 10:48 AM
To: Tom Hughes
Cc: Cherie Whitby; Danielle Smith (danielle.smith@abs.gov.au); John D Moore (john.moore@abs.gov.au); Michael Meagher (michael.meagher@abs.gov.au); Rachel Ren; todd.sweeting@abs.gov.au; Marcel van Kints
Subject: Re: draft audit report on Release Management [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Tom, unfortunately we were not pre-emptive enough and a subject matter area did pre-release some data via e-mail yesterday. As a result the ABS released this media alert <http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/IRDB.NSF/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/EC06EFA1958DD01DCA2579F7001CC6DB?Opendocument>

I have met with Trevor Sutton and Michael Davies this morning and we have agreed that the best way forward is to ask Oakton to extend the current release management audit and review the circumstances of this incident and document it clearly as part of the audit findings.

Is this possible?

Thanks Merry

Merry Branson

Assistant Statistician (Branch Head)

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☎ merry.branson@abs.gov.au ☎ www.abs.gov.au

▼ Tom Hughes ---12/03/2012 10:44:55 AM---Todd Here is the draft audit report on Release Management. I have made the minor changes that we di

From: Tom Hughes <tom.hughes@oakton.com.au>
To: "todd.sweeting@abs.gov.au" <todd.sweeting@abs.gov.au>
Cc: "John D Moore (john.moore@abs.gov.au)" <john.moore@abs.gov.au>, "merry.branson@abs.gov.au" <merry.branson@abs.gov.au>, Rachel Ren <rachel.ren@abs.gov.au>, "Danielle Smith (danielle.smith@abs.gov.au)" <danielle.smith@abs.gov.au>, "Michael Meagher (michael.meagher@abs.gov.au)" <michael.meagher@abs.gov.au>, Cherie Whitby <cherie.whitby@oakton.com.au>
Date: 12/03/2012 10:44 AM
Subject: draft audit report on Release Management

Todd

Here is the draft audit report on Release Management. I have made the minor changes that we discussed on Friday.

Can you now please proceed to prepare management comments and expected completion dates for each of the six recommendations. The Audit Committee expects these to be provided within 20 working days so they are due by Thursday 12th April.

The management comments should be cleared through Merry and Jenine and then forwarded to Rachel Ren in

OOTS.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss further any aspects of the report, please let me know.

Thanks

Tom

Tom Hughes
Partner, Accounting and Assurance

Oakton Consulting Technology

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(section 47C)

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From: "Goltsman, Michael " <michael.goltsman@citi.com>
To: "Neel Tikaram" <neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au>, "Woolford, Craig " <craig.woolford@citi.com>
Date: 07/05/2012 04:36 PM
Subject: RE: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012, Media Release [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks Neel.

From: Neel Tikaram [mailto:neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 7 May 2012 4:32 PM
To: Goltsman, Michael [ICG-CIRA]; Woolford, Craig [ICG-CIRA]
Subject: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012, Media Release [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear Michael and Craig,

I would like to bring the following media release to your attention.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/IRDB.NSF/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/EC06EFA1958DD01DCA2579F7001CC6DB?Opendocument>

Regards,

Neel Tikaram

Assistant Director

Development and Data Management | Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys and Prices | **Australian
Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 9268 4792

(E) neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

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Retail Trade MEI WDB
Sent by Neel Tikaram

07/05/2012 04:24 PM

Send	To Sarah.Wang@yum.com, Cameron.Fincher@yum.com, Glenda.Vasco@yum.com cc
Subject	Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012, Media Release Notes Link
Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
Categories	29. March 2012 Client Requests
Visibility	Public
Editors	Alan Lambert/Staff/ABS, Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Document Usage	Statistical Dissemination - determines recordkeeping action
Last modified	07/05/2012 04:35:14 PM By Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Document Id	NTIM-8U39HZ
Edit Log	07/05/2012 04:23:24 PM; Neel Tikaram; Document created.

Dear Sarah,

I would like to bring the following media release to your attention.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/IRDB.NSF/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/EC06EFA1958DD01DCA2579F7001CC6DB?Opendocument>

Regards,

Neel Tikaram

Assistant Director

Development and Data Management | Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys and Prices | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 9268 4792

(E) neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

Retail Trade MEI WDB
Sent by Neel Tikaram

07/05/2012 04:27 PM

Send	To jbaeken@urbis.com.au cc
Subject	Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012, Media Release Notes Link
Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
Categories	29, March 2012 Client Requests
Visibility	Public
Editors	Alan Lambert/Staff/ABS, Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Document Usage	Statistical Dissemination - determines recordkeeping action
Last modified	07/05/2012 04:34:11 PM By Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Document Id	NTIM-8U39KF
Edit Log	07/05/2012 04:25:41 PM; Neel Tikaram; Document created.

Dear Jack,

I would like to bring the following media release to your attention.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/IRDB.NSF/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/EC06EFA1958DD01DCA2579F7001CC6DB?Opendocument>

Regards,

Neel Tikaram

Assistant Director

Development and Data Management | Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys and Prices | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

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(E) neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

Retail Trade MEI WDB
Sent by Neel Tikaram

07/05/2012 04:25 PM

Send	To: justin.ganly@deependservices.com.au cc:
Subject	Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012, Media Release Notes Link
Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
Categories	29. March 2012 Client Requests
Visibility	Public
Editors	Alan Lambert/Staff/ABS, Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Document Usage	Statistical Dissemination - determines recordkeeping action
Last modified	07/05/2012 04:34:23 PM By Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Document Id	NTIM-8U39GA
Edit Log	07/05/2012 04:20:39 PM; Neel Tikaram; Document created.

Dear Justin,

I would like to bring the following media release to your attention.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/IRDB.NSF/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/EC06EFA1958DD01DCA2579F7001CC6DB?OpenDocument>

Regards,

Neel Tikaram

Assistant Director

Development and Data Management | Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys and Prices | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 9268 4792

(E) neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

From: "James, Craig" <craig.james@cba.com.au>
To: Neel Tikaram <neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au>
Date: 07/05/2012 05:17 PM
Subject: RE: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012, Media Release [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Yep, thanks. We got it early and sat on it. Mistakes happen I suppose.

Cheers
Craig

From: Neel Tikaram [mailto:neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 7 May 2012 4:31 PM
To: James, Craig
Subject: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012, Media Release [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear Craig,

I would like to bring the following media release to your attention.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/IRDB.NSF/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/EC06EFA1958DD01DCA2579F7001CC6DB?Opendocument>

Regards,

Neel Tikaram

Assistant Director

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(P) (02) 9268 4792

(E) neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

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From: Retail Trade MEI WDB
To: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 12:12 PM
Subject: Retail Trade early release incident [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]
Sent by: Angus Bristow

Approximate 10:45 the client request spreadsheets were finalised, created by me, checked by Alan.

This month Roberto was taking charge of sending out the client requests. a series of emails were pre prepared and can be found here:

Notes Link (Subject: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (YUM); Database: Retail Trade MEI WDB; Author: Roberto Urzua; Created: 07/05/2012; Doc Ref: RURA-8U32SV)

Notes Link (Subject: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (Deep End Services); Database: Retail Trade MEI WDB; Author: Roberto Urzua; Created: 07/05/2012; Doc Ref: RURA-8U32U2)

Notes Link (Subject: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (URBISHJHD); Database: Retail Trade MEI WDB; Author: Roberto Urzua; Created: 07/05/2012; Doc Ref: RURA-8U32UU)

Notes Link (Subject: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (**withheld**); Database: Retail Trade MEI WDB; Author: Roberto Urzua; Created: 07/05/2012; Doc Ref: RURA-8U32VE)

Notes Link (Subject: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (Commsec); Database: Retail Trade MEI WDB; Author: Roberto Urzua; Created: 07/05/2012; Doc Ref: RURA-8U32VZ)

Notes Link (Subject: Notification: Retail Trade, Australia - March 2012 (Citigroup); Database: Retail Trade MEI WDB; Author: Roberto Urzua; Created: 07/05/2012; Doc Ref: RURA-8U32WG)

Just after 11am Roberto asked me which spreadsheets to attach. I advised him as to which spreadsheets to use and then told him that once attached he should save the emails and then send them separately. I did not specify the embargo time.

Some point after this Roberto clarified which email to use for the Yum request.

Having misunderstood the instruction between 11:11 and 11:12 am Roberto sent out the emails.

The information contained within them varies but all have data as to the performance of retail trade in the current month and certainly the spreadsheets for Urbis, Commsec, (**withheld**) and Citigroup all contained the headline seasonally adjusted movements or sufficient information from which they could be derived.

Approximately 11:27 I became aware of the incident when Alan raised it with me as a result of something Roberto had just said to him. I then spoke immediately with Neel.

Angus Bristow

From: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS
To: Michael Davies/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS, Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS, Bruce Hockman/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 12:46 PM
Subject: Retail trade incident [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]

Michael,

About 11.10 this morning - a consultancy report on retail trade was sent to six clients - these included **(withheld)**, Citigroup and Comsec.

My understanding is that the release occurred when someone was copying the consultancy report to a secure database but inadvertently sent it to the clients.

The report consisted of a series of spreadsheets. The headline figure would not have been readily apparent - but could have been derived.

The trend estimates growth was in line with previous months (0.3%), however the seasonally adjusted figure was a bit firmer (0.9% compared with 0.3%) - quite a bit above market expectations.

The release does not appear to have moved the market. Stock prices fell on opening, rose slightly at around 10.30 but then fell before 11.00. The prices remained relatively stable between 11.00 am and 11.30 am but with a very slight rise at 11.30. Prices have continued to decline since then

There is no evidence of any move on the Australian dollar prior to the 11.30 release.

We have not received any queries about the data or any suggestions of early release.

A fuller report is in preparation.

Paul Williams
Regional Director

New South Wales | Australian Bureau of Statistics

(P) (02) 9268 4236 (F) (02) 9268 4445

(E) paul.williams@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au/mailto:your.address@abs.gov.au

From: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS
To: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 01:57 PM
Subject: Retail trade issue [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STATISTICS]

Michael has told me that the ABS will be issuing a public statement on this. I should get a draft soon.

Paul Williams
Regional Director

New South Wales | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

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From: Todd Sweeting/Staff/ABS
To: Dean Souter/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Courtney Macgregor/Staff/ABS@ABS, Cc: Lewis Conn/Staff/ABS@ABS, Michael Davies/Staff/ABS@ABS, Merry Branson/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 03:28 PM
Subject: Re: Fw: retail release text - approved by BP

Thanks Dean

It's on the home page now.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/>

Regards,

Todd

Todd Sweeting

A/g Director

Web Publishing Section

Customer Services Branch | ABS 2017 Program Delivery Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

☎ +61 2 6252 6448

✉ todd.sweeting@abs.gov.au 🌐 www.abs.gov.au

From: Dean Souter/Staff/ABS
To: Courtney Macgregor/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Lewis Conn/Staff/ABS@ABS, Michael Davies/Staff/ABS@ABS, Todd Sweeting/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 02:55 PM
Subject: Fw: retail release text - approved by BP

Hi Courtney,

Can you please load this into WCA as a media alert and send to me for immediate approval, I have checked with Todd Sweeting and he believes we can have this released this afternoon. It's for our web page only and is not to be sent to media outlets via AAP Media Net

Dean Souter

Assistant Director

Communication and Ministerial Liaison | Office of the Statistician and External Engagement | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 6252 5691 (M) 0405 124 471

(E) dean.souter@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

----- Forwarded by Dean Souter/Staff/ABS on 07/05/2012 02:53 PM -----

From: Michael Davies/Staff/ABS
To: Trevor Sutton/Staff/ABS@ABS, Peter Harper/Staff/ABS@ABS, Ian Ewing/Staff/ABS@ABS, Dean Souter/Staff/ABS@ABS, Lewis Conn/Staff/ABS@ABS, Paul Williams/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 07/05/2012 02:48 PM
Subject: retail release text - approved by BP

Early Release of Retail Trade Data

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has discovered that some data relating to ABS publication no. 8501.0 *Retail Trade, Australia, March 2012* was emailed to six clients at 11.10 am on Monday, 7 May 2012. This was twenty minutes before the official release of the publication.

The ABS recognises that this is a breach of our release policy. I have instigated a full review of the circumstances leading up to the release to understand why it happened and to prevent it from happening again.

Queries relating to this incident can be directed to ABS Corporate Communications on 1300 175 070.

Brian Pink
Australian Statistician

Early Release of Retail Trade Data on 7 May 2012

1. For reasons of impartiality, ABS statistics are made available to all users at the same time. ABS statistical products are subject to an embargo until 11.30 am Canberra time on the day of release. Extensive security and other infrastructure is in place to ensure that the data are not released in advance of 11.30 am.

2. Data releases take two forms: (1) general releases (publications, spreadsheets etc.) which are loaded to the ABS website at 11.30 am and are available to everyone and (2) customised information consultancies, which are special analyses tailored to a client's individual requirements. General releases are the primary means by which the ABS publishes the main findings of statistical collections and compilations, along with detailed statistical and related information.

3. On 7 May 2012, some data relating to ABS publication no 8501.0 *Retail Trade Australia March 2012* were emailed to six clients at 11.10 am. This was twenty minutes before the official release of the publication. The data were special analyses for the individual clients and is supplied to these clients as a regular order every month. The information contained within the individual client requests vary, but all have data on the performance of retail trade in the past month. Some of the spreadsheets contained seasonally adjusted data and sufficient information from which the headline seasonally adjusted and volume movements could be derived.

4. The customised reports for March retail trade were prepared as normal and a series of emails was prepared for the despatch of the data to the clients after the 11.30 am release time, as is the normal practice. At about 11.00 am the spreadsheets were attached to the prepared emails. Instead of saving the emails for later despatch, they were sent to the clients.

5. At 11.25 am, as a result of a discussion, the supervisor became aware that the emails had been sent in advance of the embargo time. The supervisor immediately reported the incident to his line manager.

6. The ABS was concerned about the potential reputational damage from the breach of release policy and the possibility that the data could be used to gain a trading advantage.

7. The ABS quickly published a Media Alert on the website, emailed a range of business economists and informed relevant government agencies of what had happened. This was done on the afternoon of 7 May.

8. There has been little feedback or comment on the incident, with it being accepted as a one off mistake. While it is not possible to be certain, we have no indication that the early release of the data has been used by clients for financial gain.

8. The incident has highlighted the risks to our reputation involved in some of our release practices and we have instigated a full review of the circumstances leading up to the early release to understand why it happened and to prevent it from happening again.

From: Merry Branson/Staff/ABS
To: Michael Davies/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS@ABS, Trevor Sutton/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 03:21 PM
Subject: Re: Retail [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:STAFF]

Hi Michael, I have actioned the Audit with Oakton and the recommendation for staff counselling see the e-mails below.

The actions in my Branch will result from the Audit findings and will mean updating ABS Policy to outline that any 11:30am releases be centralised with Web Publishing and that any other data on release day be strictly controlled and not release until after the publishing window was closed at 2pm on the day of release.

I am busy today finding an ex ABS contractor to undertake that task for us between now and the end of the financial year.

Thanks Merry

Merry Branson

Assistant Statistician (Branch Head)

Customer Services Branch | ABS 2017 Program Delivery Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

☎ +61 2 6252 6353 ☎ 0407 952 606

☎ merry.branson@abs.gov.au ☎ www.abs.gov.au

From: Michael Davies/Staff/ABS
To: Paul Williams/Staff/ABS@ABS, Merry Branson/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 01:52 PM
Subject: Retail

I have been asked to provide a briefing for the parliamentary secretary On Friday morning when he is here on the retail release incident.

Paul, could you update what you have already done both with any extra info and to make it suitable for presentation to an outsider.

Merry, could you please summarise the way ahead as discussed.

MD

From: Tom Hughes <tom.hughes@oakton.com.au>
To: "didier.rivet@abs.gov.au" <didier.rivet@abs.gov.au>
Date: 08/05/2012 04:50 PM
Subject: Retail Trade early release incident

Didier

My take on this incident is as follows:

The normal team procedure is to:

- Prepare email text in advance and have them ready in the WDB
- Prepare the spreadsheets and have these checked.
- Attach the spreadsheets to the emails prior to 11:30 and resave in the WDB
- Send the emails at 11:30

Yesterday, 7th May the following incident happened.

- The spreadsheets were given to a team member (Roberto) by an APS6 (Angus).
- Roberto had been allocated the responsibility for sending the emails. (Not by Angus who is new to the team)
- The APS6 explained which spreadsheets went to which customers.
- The APS6 did not clarify the time that the emails were to be sent as he took it for granted that the 11:30 time was well understood by all staff.
- The team member understood that he had been instructed to send the emails once the spreadsheets had been attached, so he sent the emails rather than resaving them into the WDB for later sending at 11:30
- As a result the emails went out some 20 minutes early.

On the face of it there is an issue with Roberto not understanding sufficiently well the importance of no data being released prior to 11:30. If he had understood, and he thought he had been instructed to send them early, then I would have expected him to query the APS6 and to have not sent the emails.

What level is Roberto?

The audit report will not mention names.

Have I missed anything?

Tom

Tom Hughes
Partner, Accounting and Assurance

Oakton Consulting Technology

T (02) 6230 1997

F (02) 6230 1919

M 0404 813 155

www.oakton.com.au

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From: Tom Hughes <tom.hughes@oakton.com.au>
To: Didier Rivet <didier.rivet@abs.gov.au>
Date: 08/05/2012 03:08 PM
Subject: RE: Release Management issue [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Didier

No great rush, when he gets a spare moment.

Tom

From: Didier Rivet [mailto:didier.rivet@abs.gov.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 8 May 2012 3:07 PM
To: Tom Hughes
Subject: Re: Release Management Issue [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Tom,

Angus is on a training course and will contact you as soon as he comes back to his desk.

Regards
Didier

☛ Tom Hughes ---08/05/2012 02:08:33 PM---Didier I provide the Internal Audit function for the ABS and as you are aware Merry Branson has aske

From: Tom Hughes <tom.hughes@oakton.com.au>
To: "didier.rivet@abs.gov.au" <didier.rivet@abs.gov.au>
Date: 08/05/2012 02:08 PM
Subject: Release Management issue

Didier

I provide the Internal Audit function for the ABS and as you are aware Merry Branson has asked me to interview you and any staff involved in the recent premature release of Retail Trade data.

I don't think this will take long, I just need to understand the circumstances of what happened.

I just tried ringing you to organise a time, I will try again shortly.

Tom

Tom Hughes
Partner, Accounting and Assurance

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From: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Cc: Angus Bristow/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 08/05/2012 03:10 PM
Subject: Fw: Release Management issue

Hi guys,

I have spoken to Tom and he would just like a quick chat with Angus and Roberto when he returns. Please call him on the number below.

Cheers
Didier

----- Forwarded by Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS on 08/05/2012 03:09 PM -----

From: Tom Hughes <tom.hughes@oakton.com.au>
To: "didier.rivet@abs.gov.au" <didier.rivet@abs.gov.au>
Date: 08/05/2012 02:08 PM
Subject: Release Management issue

Didier

I provide the Internal Audit function for the ABS and as you are aware Merry Branson has asked me to interview you and any staff involved in the recent premature release of Retail Trade data.

I don't think this will take long, I just need to understand the circumstances of what happened.

I just tried ringing you to organise a time, I will try again shortly.

Tom

Tom Hughes
Partner, Accounting and Assurance

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From: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 01:02 PM
Subject: Re: Fw: SIRS - The incident report recently submitted has now been registered by Security staff (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]

Thanks Neel.

From: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
To: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS
Cc: Angus Bristow/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 01:01 PM
Subject: Fw: SIRS - The incident report recently submitted has now been registered by Security staff (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]

Hey Dids,

Attached is a link to the security incident report that we were asked to complete. It has also been automatically sent to Steve and Tony, might have something to do with the location of where the incident occurred.

Cheers,

Neel Tikaram

Assistant Director

Development and Data Management | Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys and Prices | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 9268 4792

(E) neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

----- Forwarded by Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS on 09/05/2012 12:57 PM -----

From: SIRS Database
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS, Tony Dwyer/Staff/ABS@ABS, Steve Kilgallon/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 12:33 PM
Subject: SIRS - The incident report recently submitted has now been registered by Security staff (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]
Sent by: Troy Stichbury

SIRS - Reported incident has been registered. Security staff should now decided whether to create an 'Investigation' and add comments, responses, attachments etc. If incident minor, then they could add comments and then 'Closed - Resolved' report.

Click the following link ==>> Notes Link to access the document.

===== ABOUT THIS NOTIFICATION =====

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From: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS
To: Chris Soczynski/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 09:47 AM
Subject: Re: Security Incident - early release of Retail Trade Data 7/5

Hi Chris,

Neel Tikraam can fill in the incident report. I apologise we missed this step.

Regards
Didier

From: Chris Soczynski/Staff/ABS
To: Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 08:29 AM
Subject: Security Incident - early release of Retail Trade Data 7/5

Good Morning Didier,

this morning I found out, purely by accident, that there was early release of Retail Trade Data on Monday 7/5. Is this relevant to your area? If so, can you suggest to whom I should speak to on obtaining a Security Incident Report Notes Link for this incident? If its another area I should be contacting, please advise.

regards,

Chris Soczynski

Director IT Security, IT Security Advisor

IT Security | Technology Planning and Support | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 6252 5678

(E) chris.soczynski@abs.gov.au **(W)** www.abs.gov.au

Incident Report

SIES Prod/20

10

Incident : Embargoed data (released before scheduled time) Status : Closed - Resolved
Date Reported : 09/05/2012
Document ID : NTIM-8U4VWP

Reporter Details

Reported By : Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Created By : Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
Office : NSW
Section : QEWS Development & Data Management
Branch : Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys BSC & Prices
Division : Macroeconomic Statistics Division
Phone : (02) 9268 4792
Location : NSW W9 353

Incident Occurred

Incident Start date : Mon 07/05/2012 Start Time : 11:11 AM
Incident End Date : Mon 07/05/2012 End Time : 11:12 AM
(if over a period) :
State/Office Where Incident Occurred : NSW Office Outside Office
Where did the Incident Occur? : Sydney office
Describe the Location :

Description

Tell us what happened :

Please provide short explanation of the incident including any information that could assist in its resolution such as the names of witnesses or contributing circumstances.

➔ Client request data relating to ABS publication no. 8501.0 Retail Trade, Australia, March 2012 was emailed to six clients around 11:11am on Monday, 7 May 2012. This was approximately twenty minutes before the official release of the publication.

A media release was issued later in the day following discussions with senior management to inform users and to acknowledge the breach in our release policy. Attached is a link to the media release:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyCatalogue/193FDEAD3B60CF62CA2579F80004F408?Opendocument>

Details :

Has property been
Stolen/Lost/Damaged/Destroyed?

Yes No

Details of people responsible for the incident

If known, please enter the names and addresses of people responsible for the incident.

Name : Roberto Urzua

Address : Sydney office

Section:

Retail Business Survey

Branch:

Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys BSC & Prices

Division:

Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Name : Angus Bristow

Address : Sydney office

Section:

Retail Business Survey

Branch:

Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys BSC & Prices

Division:

Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Was any body injured? :

Yes

No

Not Applicable

Signature Signed by Tony Dwyer/Staff/ABS on 16/05/2012 10:43:46 AM, according to /ABS

Police Involvement

Police involvement information is not required for this Incident.

Were police called? :

Yes No

Edit History

Report Closed by Tony Dwyer on 16/05/2012 10:43:44 AM
Response Document Created/Updated by NotesACT07 on 16/05/2012 10:43:18 AM
Document Updated by Troy Stichbury on 09/05/2012 12:39:58 PM
Document Updated by Troy Stichbury on 09/05/2012 12:39:55 PM
Report Registered by Troy Stichbury on 09/05/2012 12:33:55 PM
Incident Submitted by Neel Tikaram on 09/05/2012 11:53:34 AM
Incident Created by Neel Tikaram on 09/05/2012 09:49:35 AM

From: SIRS Database
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS, Tony Dwyer/Staff/ABS@ABS, Steve Kilgallon/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 11:53 AM
Subject: SIRS - A Security breach or incident has been submitted (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]
Sent by: Neel Tikaram

SIRS - A Security report has been submitted which requires the attention of Security staff (Registration, Investigation or Closed - Resolved). Registering the report is the next step and notifies all parties that Security staff have acknowledged report has reached them.

Click the following link ==>> Notes Link to access the document.

===== ABOUT THIS NOTIFICATION =====
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From: Troy Stichbury/Staff/ABS
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Dave Quan-Wing/Staff/ABS@ABS, Marcel van Kints/Staff/ABS@ABS, Terry Lutze/Staff/ABS@ABS, Chris Soczynski/Staff/ABS@ABS, Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS@ABS, Danielle Smith/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 03:15 PM
Subject: Re: SIRS Notification - Predefined Priority Category (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]

Many thanks Neel,

Just by happenstance I have just finished meeting with Danielle Smith from the Audit, Policy and Parliamentary area who re-iterated this advice.

Cheers,
Troy.

Troy Stichbury

Director Security, Agency Security Advisor

ABS Protective Security Section | Technology Strategy and Planning | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 6252 5802 (M) 0409 486 909 (F) (02) 6252 5286

(E) troy.stichbury@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

Please note that I am away from the office every second Friday (20 April, 4 May, 18 May, 1 June)

" SECURITY - Everyone's Business"

From: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS
To: Troy Stichbury/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Dave Quan-Wing/Staff/ABS@ABS, Marcel van Kints/Staff/ABS@ABS, Terry Lutze/Staff/ABS@ABS, Chris Soczynski/Staff/ABS@ABS, Didier Rivet/Staff/ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 02:59 PM
Subject: Re: SIRS Notification - Predefined Priority Category (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]

Hi Troy,

There is an audit currently underway of release management which is being undertaken by Oakton consulting. It has been decided through discussions between Michael Davis, Trevor Sutton and Merry Branson to extend this audit to include the Retail incident.

We have been advised that one of the recommendations of the existing audit is that any 11:30am releases be centralised with Web Publishing and that any other data on release day be strictly controlled and not released until after the publishing window was closed at 2pm on the day of release. The Customer Services Branch have taken responsibility for drafting a new policy outlining this and getting that endorsed by SMG.

The contact from Oakton is Tom Hughes.

Regards,

Neel Tikaram

Assistant Director

Development and Data Management | Quarterly Economy Wide Surveys and Prices | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 9268 4792

(E) neel.tikaram@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

From: Troy Stichbury/Staff/ABS
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS
Cc: Dave Quan-Wing/Staff/ABS@ABS, Marcel van Kints/Staff/ABS@ABS, Terry Lutz/Staff/ABS@ABS, Chris Soczynski/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 01:02 PM
Subject: Re: SIRS Notification - Predefined Priority Category (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]

Dear Neel,

Thank you for submitting this incident report.

I note that the Australian Statistician mentioned in his media alert that a full review into the breach of ABS release policy has been initiated. Are you aware of who is undertaking this review? Chris and I would gratefully appreciate being kept informed of its progress and any outcomes / recommendations.

We are of course happy to provide any assistance where appropriate.

Happy to discuss,
Troy.

Troy Stichbury

Director Security, Agency Security Advisor

ABS Protective Security Section | Technology Strategy and Planning | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) (02) 6252 5802 (M) 0409 486 909 (F) (02) 6252 5286

(E) troy.stichbury@abs.gov.au (W) www.abs.gov.au

Please note that I am away from the office every second Friday (20 April, 4 May, 18 May, 1 June)

" SECURITY - Everyone's Business"

From: SIRS Database
To: Troy Stichbury/Staff/ABS@ABS, Dave Quan-Wing/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 09/05/2012 11:53 AM
Subject: SIRS Notification - Predefined Priority Category (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]
Sent by: Neel Tikaram

SIRS - A Security report has been submitted which requires the attention of Security staff (Registration, Investigation or Closed - Resolved). Registering the report is the next step and notifies all parties that Security staff have acknowledged report has reached them.

This email was set up to alert the Director Security of any Security Reports that are in the Priority Category. Currently these include the following:

- Assault of ABS Officer/s
- Breach of Supervision of contractors/visitors inside ABS premises
- CMMR article (and/or contents) missing
- Embargoed data (Other)
- Embargoed data (released before scheduled time)
- Loss of MEI (Major Economic Indicator) information
- MEI bag (Seal missing)
- Suspicious event
- Theft - Other
- Theft of ABS assets by corrupt management or procedures
- Theft of ABS assets (cash, goods) by armed attacker/s
- Theft of an AGCC card
- Threat to ABS personnel

Click the following link ==>> Notes Link to access the document.

===== ABOUT THIS NOTIFICATION =====

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From: SIRS Database
To: Neel Tikaram/Staff/ABS@ABS, Tony Dwyer/Staff/ABS@ABS, Steve Kilgallon/Staff/ABS@ABS
Date: 16/05/2012 10:43 AM
Subject: SIRS - The reported incident has now been Closed. (NTIM-8U4VWP) [SEC=IN-CONFIDENCE:SECURITY]
Sent by: Tony Dwyer

SIRS - Security have now Closed this reported incident. Any procedural changes should now have been organised to limit future occurrence of similar incidents.

Click the following link ==>> Notes Link to access the document.

===== ABOUT THIS NOTIFICATION =====

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