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What's Hot in ABS Victoria

Better Data Sharing Between Agencies Crucial for Improved Public Policy and Service Provision

The development of better directed public policy measures remains central to government today. Crucial to this is the availability of relevant information to those who make, implement, and revise policies. ABS, in conjunction with State agencies, has worked hard for over a century to provide a wide range of statistical information. Such data has included the regular national Population Census, which commenced in 1911, and an increasingly sophisticated range of household and workplace surveys.

In recent years, the need has become evident for increased statistical data across a more detailed range of topics, and for greater geographic depth. This has led an increasing number of people in government (as well as in academic research, business and community) to focus on government administrative data as a source for detailed summary data. There is recognition that sample surveys in households, workplaces and streets cannot meet all of the needs of government; and there are limits to the number of sample surveys which people will complete (respondent burden).

Whole of Victorian Government Data (WoVG) Data Sharing. Pooling of effort and exchange of data between government agencies at all three levels has emerged as a crucial issue in recent times. Some agencies have worked on ad hoc agreements with others. Some have made bilateral arrangements to exchange data. Others have become involved in multilateral arrangements such as the Whole of Victorian Government (WoVG) Data Sharing Project, which aims to bring a range of Victorian agencies into a multilateral data sharing arrangement. Work is proceeding on this and related projects. The growing emphasis on developing indicators of community well-being (social, economic, environmental) also creates demands for wider use of administrative data.

For its part, ABS is placing a strong emphasis on backing up such efforts, and providing assistance wherever it can. For several years now, ABS has been promoting the idea of expanding the National Statistical Service (NSS) by bringing together statistical outputs across government. The ABS' own products would provide a core of data within this NSS; but a wider range of summary level outputs, derived from government's own service and administrative processes, would also be available. The ABS aims to actively promote improved data quality and data management methods within agencies. Strong emphasis will also be placed on enhancing approaches to individual privacy and confidentiality of data.

ABS National Data Network (NDN). As part of its NSS goals, ABS is developing a National Data Network (NDN). It seeks to provide a means whereby agencies will be able to provide and access data from many organisations. Within this, data quality and common standards will be promoted, and metadata and topic searching facilities will be available. Privacy will be respected, and a node based system will ensure that the actual data remains in control of the providing NDN member. Other data sharing projects, such as the WoVG, could use the NDN as a link. The NDN contrasts with earlier data exchange models that sought to centralise each contributing agency's data contribution under one roof.

Advancement of inter-agency, privacy-protected data sharing remains a key need within government. The capacity to tap into an enhanced range of data, linked by a common network, will greatly assist with government policy making and review.

WHAT'S HOT IN ABS VICTORIA

Continued advancement of data sharing projects within Victorian State and local government remains a key goal. ABS will actively assist wherever possible in seeing practical data sharing arrangements become reality.

For further information please visit <www.nss.gov.au> or <www.nationaldatanetwork.org>. Contact Neil McLean on Melbourne (03) 9615 7463 or email <neil.mclean@abs.gov.au>.

First Victorian Statistics Advisory Forum meeting of 2005.

The first meeting of the newly constituted Victorian Statistics Advisory Forum (VSAF) took place on Tuesday 8 March, 2005 and involved a full agenda. The meeting began with Mr Vin Martin, chair of VSAF and Victorian representative on the Australian Statistical Advisory Council (ASAC) providing an overview of the State Statistical Forum (SSF) meeting held in Canberra on 16 February 2005. The SSF meets once a year and provides an opportunity for discussion on issues that are of particular importance to the States and Territories. Mr Martin provided the VSAF meeting with brief highlights of this year's SSF meeting which covered discussion of: 2005 State Statistical Priorities, developments in population estimates, house price indexes and state accounts, an update on trial land management surveys using land parcel frames, and progress reports on the National Data Network and the Education and Training Information Development Plan.

Mr Vince Lazzaro (ABS) outlined the process for identifying Victoria's State Statistical Service projects for 2005/06 which stems from the 2005 Victorian State Statistical

Priorities process. These projects enable the Victorian Office of ABS to undertake work on addressing some of the important statistical gaps identified by Victorian State Government, which haven't made it on to the ABS national forward work program. VSAF members have been asked to submit project proposals to the ABS enabling them to advocate particular areas where Victorian ABS resources can be directed. These project proposals will be discussed at the next VSAF meeting.

The March meeting saw active participation from a number of VSAF members. Presentations were given in relation to two working groups established as part of the review which formed the new VSAF. Mr Robert Brazenor (Department of Human Services) discussed a report on intra-departmental information exchange while Mr Mark Burford (Department of Premier and Cabinet) gave an update on reporting for the Growing Victoria Together initiative. Mr Gary Stoneham (Department of Primary Industries) discussed a couple of reports which his department has compiled. These present a range of statistics on minerals and petroleum (mining) industries and agriculture, forestry and fishing industries and were well received by other VSAF members. The meeting concluded with a discussion on the State of the Environment report. Mr John Hannah (Department of Sustainability and Environment) noted that Victoria's first Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability has been appointed and will be seeking input from all departments. The next VSAF meeting is scheduled for May 2005.

Contact Antonella Caruso on Melbourne (03) 9615 7860 or email <antonella.caruso@abs.gov.au>.

Victorian Homelessness Data Dictionary Project

Homelessness has been identified in the Growing Victoria Together (GVT) initiative, specifically the commitment to "address inequality and disadvantage to ensure that in times of crisis, Victorians have access to the support they need." The Victorian Homelessness Strategy (VHS) was commissioned by State government in 2000 with the aim of improving services and developing a whole of government response toward a prevention/interventionist approach to homelessness. This response is based on the recognition that homelessness is linked to a range of issues such as health problems, unemployment, and lack of education and training opportunities.

A key component of the VHS is the Integrated Homelessness Data Collection (IHDC), recently developed by the Homelessness Assistance Unit, Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS). This new collection addresses the shortcomings of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP, national data collection), and the Transitional Housing Management Program (THM, DHS Victorian data collection). The IHDC will operate as a single integrated data collection between these two programs. The limitations of current collections

essentially relate to lack of comparability between SAAP and THM, as there is limited metadata documentation to assist with reporting requirements and no common definitions for data collected between THM agencies.

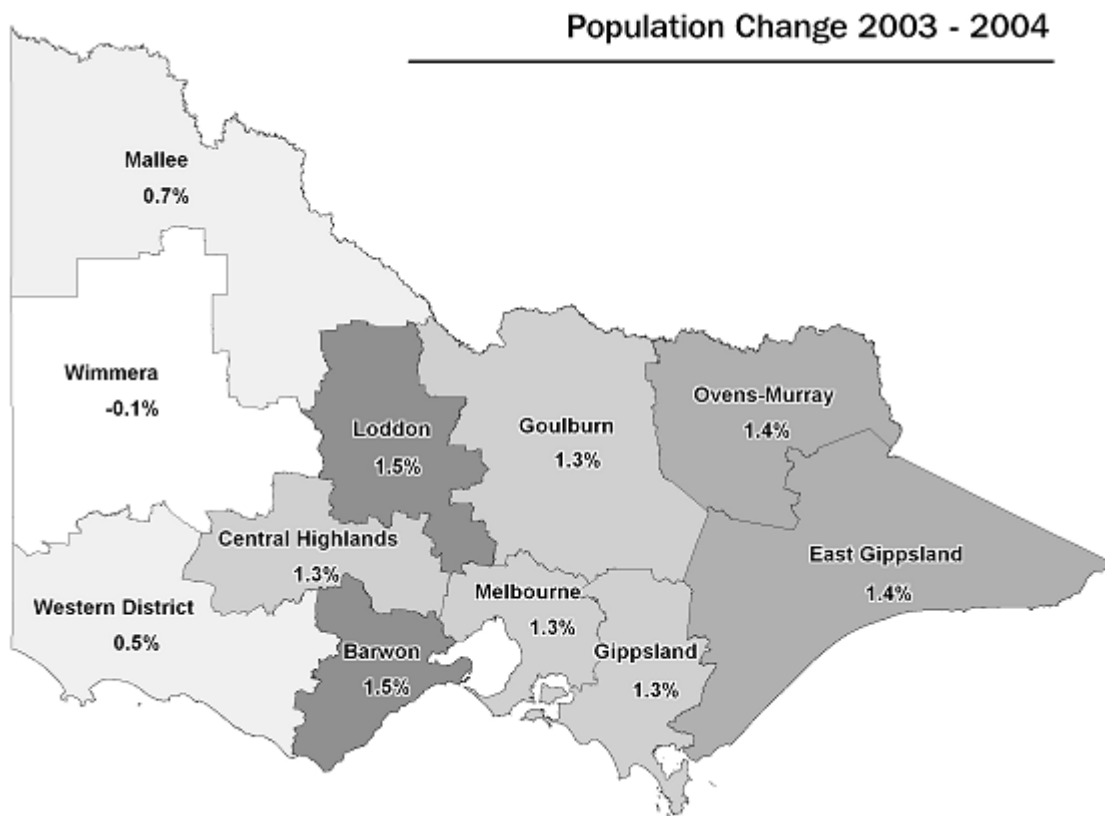
ABS Victoria provided advice on draft DHS Homelessness Data Dictionary content, which is fundamentally a repository of best practice/statistical standards pertaining to homelessness and will form a key part of IHDC. ABS expertise was drawn upon in order to ensure that, as far as possible, the Data Dictionary adheres to national standards and frameworks. A supplementary report provided advice on Homelessness Data Collection Forms.

From an ABS perspective, this project assists in increasing the availability of good quality state and regional data, while addressing a high priority Victorian government statistical need. It also fulfils a key principle of the National Statistical Service (NSS) for the promotion of 'best practice', in that it encourages the implementation of appropriate classifications and standards.

Contact Sarah Reichert on Melbourne (03) 9615 7425 or email <sarah.reichert@abs.gov.au>.

WHAT'S HOT IN ABS VICTORIA

1367.2 State and Regional Indicators, Victoria March 2005. Released 12/05/2005.



At June 30, 2004, the Barwon and Loddon Statistical Divisions recorded the fastest annual growth in population (1.5% each). The Melbourne Statistical Division recorded a 1.3% increase, whereas Wimmera experienced negative population growth of 0.1%.

For these and other statistics on Victorian social, economic and environmental indicators, see the March quarter 2005 edition of *State and Regional Indicators, Victoria* (cat. no. 1367.2).

Contact Neil McLean on Melbourne (03) 9615 7463 or email <neil.mclean@abs.gov.au>.

SELECTED RECENT RELEASES

Economy and industry

1329.0 Australian Wine and Grape Industry, 2004.

Released 27/01/2005.

Record crops in 2003-04 provided a significant turnaround from the drought conditions experienced throughout most wine growing regions during 2002-03. The poor results of 2002-03 for the Australian wine and grape industry were followed by record harvest, crush and wine production levels in 2003-04. Grape crush increased 37.1% and wine production rose 34.4%. The year was highlighted by continued growth in exports of Australian-produced wine which reached 584 million litres. Domestic sales of Australian wine also continued to grow, exceeding 400 million litres for the second consecutive year.

South Australia remains the principal red grape-growing State with 54.6% of total red grape production and 56.2% of red grapes used for winemaking. Victoria produced 35.7% of all white grapes produced in 2004, followed by South Australia (31.3%) and New South Wales (27.2%).

South Australia accounted for 37.6% of white grapes used for winemaking.

In 2003-04, there were 142,877 hectares of vineyards irrigated. Of 7,957 vineyards in Australia, some 7,060 (88.7%) were irrigated. Victoria averaged 5.2 Megalitres of water per hectare, New South Wales 4.49 Megalitres, and South Australia 3.17 Megalitres.

Contact Graeme Thomas on Adelaide (08) 8237 7536 or email <graeme.thomas@abs.gov.au>.

7121.0.55.002 Agricultural Survey, Apples and Pears, Australia, 2003-04. Released 15/02/2005.

In Australia during 2003-04, the number of apple trees increased by 3% from the previous year to 10.5 million. Increases in tree numbers were reported in the two main growing states: New South Wales (increased 9% to 2.1 million trees) and Victoria (up 8% to 3.5 million), and partially offset by a decrease in Tasmania (down 12% to 1.4 million).

SELECTED RECENT RELEASES

In 2003-04, the production of apples decreased by 22% from the previous year to 254,900 tonnes. Decreases in production in most states reflected unfavourable seasonal conditions, including drought, frost or hailstorms. Victoria reported a decrease in apple production of 29% to 84,100 tonnes, Tasmania a decrease of 29% to 37,300 tonnes, and New South Wales a 23% decrease to 47,700 tonnes. The one exception was an increase in Queensland, up 14% to 27,900 tonnes, largely due to increased production by some bigger orchardists.

Final estimates for 2003-04 show the number of pear trees increased by 2% from the previous year to 2.1 million. All states, except Queensland, recorded increases. The largest increase was in South Australia (13% increase, to 116,500 trees). The production of pears increased by 2% from the previous year to 142,100 tonnes in 2003-04, with increases in all states except New South Wales and Tasmania.

Contact John Moody on Hobart (03) 6222 5867 or email <john.moody@abs.gov.au>.

8155.0.55.003 Australian Industry: States, Territories and Australia; Experimental Estimates, Summary of Operations by ANZSIC Subdivision 2002-03. Released 07/02/2005.

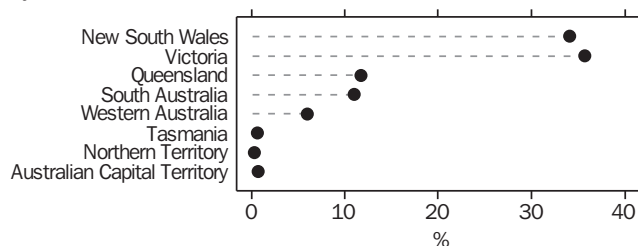
Data items include: wages and salaries, total income, total expenses, operating profit before tax; with industry at ANZSIC sub-division level, and state level data presentation. This product is an Excel format data cube.

Contact John Ridley on Sydney (02) 9268 4541 or email <john.ridley@abs.gov.au>.

8158.0 Innovation in Australian Business, 2003. Released 17/02/2005.

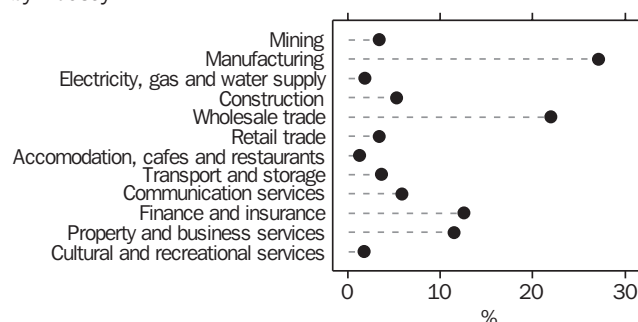
The 2003 survey covers businesses in 12 of the 17 ANZSIC Divisions, with the exceptions being: Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Government administration and defence; Education; Health and community services; and Personal and other services divisions. It also excluded businesses with less than five employees and those classified to General Government in the Standard Institutional Sector Classification of Australia (SISCA). The survey collected details of innovation and expenditure. Data from the 1993-94 and 1996-97 Innovation in Manufacturing surveys are compared to the 2003 Innovation survey. There are 9 tables with state data in this 10 chapter publication, and quite a bit of industry level information. Some international comparison (eg. Europe & NZ) is also made.

CONTRIBUTION TO EXPENDITURE ON INNOVATION (a), 2002-03, by states and territories



(a) The innovation expenditure estimates should be used with care, see the Technical Notes for more detail.

CONTRIBUTION TO EXPENDITURE ON INNOVATION (a), 2002-03, by industry



(a) The innovation expenditure estimates should be used with care, see the Technical Notes for more detail.

Contact Peter Hodgson on Perth (08) 9360 5367 or email <peter.hodgson@abs.gov.au>.

8501.0.55.003 Contribution of Gambling to Retail Estimates, December 2004. Retail 11/02/2005.

This quarterly release supplements information presented in **Retail Trade, Australia** (cat. no. 8501.0). It presents information about net proceeds received from licensed gambling activities undertaken by businesses in the pubs, taverns and bars and clubs (hospitality) industries; and contains one table with state level data.

Contact Graham Phillips on Canberra (02) 6252 5625 or email <graham.phillips@abs.gov.au>.

Social

3311.2.55.001 Demography, Victoria, 2003. Released 22/02/2005.

This electronic product provides a demographic overview of Victoria for 2003. In 2002-03, Victoria's population increased by 54,200 persons to 4,911,400, consisting of natural increase (27,400 persons) and overseas migration (26,800 persons). Victoria's growth rate of 1.1% compared with 1.2% for Australia, while the highest growth rates occurred in Queensland (2.4%) and Western Australia (1.3%). In 2002-03, Victoria recorded the second highest net migration gain (26,800 persons) of all States and Territories, almost all of which was due to overseas migration.

SELECTED RECENT RELEASES

In 2003, there were 61,100 live births registered to mothers usually resident in Victoria. The median age of all Victorian mothers giving birth increased to 31.2 years in 2003, compared to 29.3 years in 1993. In 2003, this was the highest median age of mothers of all the States and Territories.

In 2003, there were 25,200 marriages registered in Victoria. Between 1993 and 2003, the number of marriages registered in Victoria declined by 8%. The median age at marriage for brides was 26.4 years in 1993 and 29.3 years in 2003, while for bridegrooms it was 28.6 and 31.2 years respectively. In 2003, there were 12,900 divorces granted in Victoria, a 16% increase on 1993.

Contact Peter Rochester in Melbourne on (03) 9615 7368 or email <peter.rochester@abs.gov.au>.

3218.0 Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand, 2003-2004. Released 23/03/2005.

Victoria's estimated resident population at June 2004 was almost 5 million (4.97 million) people, an increase of 61,400 people since June 2003, representing an annual growth rate of 1.2%. At June 2004, there were an estimated 3.6 million people resident in the Melbourne Statistical Division (SD), an increase of 44,800 people (1.3%) since June 2003.

The largest population increases in Victoria continued to occur on the outer suburban fringes of Melbourne SD. In 2003-04, Casey (C) (8,700 people, 4.3%) experienced the largest growth of Victorian LGAs; followed by Wyndham (C) (8,400, 8.4%) and Melton (S) (5,900, 9.1%). Melton had the highest growth rate in Victoria. Of Victorian regional centres, the LGA of Greater Geelong (C) (2,800 people, or 1.4%) experienced the largest increase during 2003-04, followed by Greater Bendigo (C) (1,700, or 1.8%) and Ballarat (C) (1,300, or 1.5%).

The largest population declines in Victoria during 2003-04 all occurred within the Melbourne SD: Banyule (C) (-680 people, 0.6%), Hobsons Bay (C) (-560, 0.7%) and Whitehorse (C) (-340, 0.2%). The highest rates of decline were recorded in regional Victoria: Yarriambiack (S) (-90 people, 1.1%), Buloke (S) (-80, 1.1%), and West Wimmera (S) (-50, 0.9%).

Contact Peter Rochester on Melbourne (03) 9615 7368 or email <peter.rochester@abs.gov.au>.

3303.0 Causes of Death, Australia, 2003. Released 24/02/2005.

During 2003, there were 132,292 deaths registered in Australia, with males comprising 51.7% of all deaths. Over the last decade, the standardised death rate for males decreased from 1020 deaths per 100,000 in 1993 to 792 per 100,000 in 2003; while the female death rate decreased from 635 to 523 per 100,000 population.

In 2003, the main underlying causes of death were malignant neoplasms (37,558, or 28.4% of all deaths) and ischaemic heart disease (25,439, 19.2%). External causes relate accidents, poisoning and violence; and

accounted for 7,749 deaths (5.6%). Seven tables address state level data.

Contact Stephanie Callaghan on Brisbane (07) 3222 6047 or email <stephanie.callaghan@abs.gov.au>.

3307.0.55.001 Divorces, Australia, 2003. Released 22/02/2005.

In Victoria during 2003, there were 12,865 divorces, giving a crude divorce rate of 2.6 persons per 1,000 estimated resident population (compared with 2.7 per 1,000 Australia-wide). The median duration of marriage to separation was 8.7 years, and 12.3 years to divorce. Some 6,739 divorces (52.4%) involved children, and these averaged 1.9 children per divorce. Age, country of birth and number of children data are also presented. This product is an Excel format data cube with 10 tables, one of which has state level data.

Contact Cassandra Eaves on Canberra (02) 6252 6384 or email <cassandra.eaves@abs.gov.au>.

3401.0 Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia, January 2005. Released 07/03/2005.

In January 2005, Australian short-term visitor arrivals (463,300) were 8.7% higher (trend terms) than in January 2004 and 9.0% higher than the series low recorded in February 2004 (425,000 movements). Short-term resident departures have recorded continued growth since May 2003. January 2005 short-term resident departures (393,600) are up by 16.3% on January 2004 (338,500 movements), and up by 38.0% from when they last bottomed out in April 2003 (285,200 movements). These increases were affected by a break in the trend series. Australia level data only in this publication.

Contact Anne Ward on Canberra (02) 6252 6871 or email <anne.ward@abs.gov.au>.

4130.0.55.001 Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia, 2002-03. Released 23/02/2005.

In Australia from 1995-96 to 2002-03:

- The proportion of owner-occupied dwellings with a mortgage or loan secured against the property increased from 40% to 48%.
- The median amount of mortgages outstanding was over one-third higher in real terms (CPI adjusted): up 37%, to \$96,000.
- The median value of 5.3 million owner occupied dwellings rose to \$250,000, a 52% increase in value.

In 2002-03, there were approximately 19.3 million people or 7.6 million households living in private dwellings, up 8% on the number of people in private dwellings in 1995-96. There was a larger increase in the number of households over this period (up 15%), reflecting a decrease in the average household size from 2.68 to 2.53 persons. The average dwelling size remained the same at 3.0 bedrooms per dwelling. The proportion of separate houses decreased from 80% to 78%, while the proportion of dwellings that were either semi-detached houses or town houses rose (from 8% to 10%).

SELECTED RECENT RELEASES

There was a decrease in the proportion of households that owned their dwelling outright, from 43% in 1995-96 to 36% in 2002-03. There were increases in the proportion of households that had a mortgage on their homes (from 28% to 33%) and were renting privately (from 19% to 22%).

In Melbourne during 2002-03, the mean housing cost per week was \$266 for an owner with a mortgage and \$196 for someone renting privately. Some 38% of Melbourne owners did not have a mortgage, 36% had a mortgage, and 25% were renting. The median value of owner dwellings in Melbourne was \$290,000, compared with \$430,000 for Sydney, and \$300,000 for all capital city owner households. The median value of owner dwellings in Melbourne varied depending on structure: semi-detached/row or terrace house/townhouse (\$320,000), separate house (\$290,000), and flat/unit/apartment (\$250,000). This publication contains 26 tables presented in Excel spreadsheet format, mainly at the Australia level, with four tables providing capital city data.

Contact Alan Wong on Canberra (02) 6252 5508 or email alan.wong@abs.gov.au.

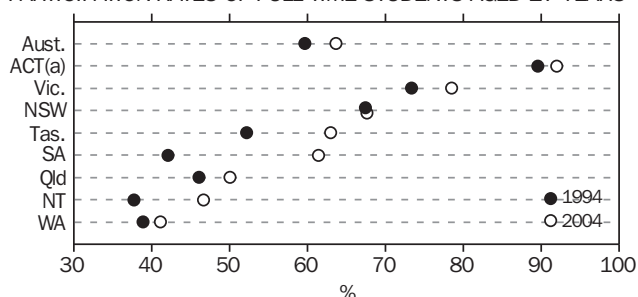
4221.0 Schools, Australia, 2004. Released 24/02/2005.

This publication relates to a census of government and non-government schools, students and school staff. During 2004, there were 822 300 full-time school students in Victoria, 65.2% of whom attended government schools. Over the period 1994 to 2004, the number of full-time students attending government schools grew 3.1% (to 536,216), while non-government schools increased by 13.1% (to 286,084).

In August 2004, there were 2,308 schools in Victoria, of which 1,618 (70.1%) were government and 690 (29.9%) non-government schools. Combined primary/secondary schools increased by 42.9% from 133 in 1994 to 190 in 2004, and accounted for 8.6% of all schools (excluding special schools).

During 2004, age participation rates for full-time school students in Victoria were 95.7% for 15-year-olds, 89.1% for 16-year-olds and 78.5% for 17-year-olds; the latter rising from 73.3% in 1994. This publication contains over twelve tables with state level information.

PARTICIPATION RATES OF FULL-TIME STUDENTS AGED 17 YEARS



(a) The ACT figures include some students who are not ACT residents.

Contact Leo Stinson on Canberra (02) 6252 7793 or email leo.stinson@abs.gov.au.

4512.0 Corrective Services, Australia, September 2004. Released 01/12/2004.

This publication presents time series information on persons in custody and community-based corrections. Details are provided of State/Territory prisoner counts by type of custody, legal status, sentence type and Indigenous status. During September quarter 2004, the average daily number of prisoners in Australia was 23,490, an increase of 341 (1%) on June quarter 2004 and an increase of 755 (3%) on the year since the September quarter 2003. Of these, the average number of unsentenced prisoners was 4,908 (21%).

During September quarter 2004, the average daily imprisonment rate for Australia was 153 prisoners per 100,000 adult population. The Australian Capital Territory (including ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons) and Victoria had the lowest imprisonment rates (79 and 94 prisoners per 100,000 adults respectively).

Contact Nick Skondreas on Melbourne (03) 9615 7381 or email nick.skondreas@abs.gov.au.

4513.0 Criminal Courts, Australia, 2003-04. Released 11/02/2005.

This publication provides characteristics of defendants dealt with by the Higher (Supreme and Intermediate) and Magistrates' Criminal Courts, including information on offences and sentence types. Information on the characteristics of defendants finalised in the criminal jurisdiction of Magistrates' Courts is presented in the publication's main suite for the first time. Previously, these data were experimental and included as an Appendix. This publication has four tables with state level data.

In 2003-04, there were more than half a million (544,689) defendants finalised in Australian Higher Criminal and Magistrates' Criminal Courts:

- Most were finalised in the Magistrates' Courts (97%);
- Nearly four in five (78%) were men, with half aged less than 35 years;
- Defendants were more likely to be adjudicated in the Higher Courts for offences intended to cause injury (21% of those adjudicated) and unlawful entry with intent (15% of those adjudicated);
- Defendants were more likely to be adjudicated in the Magistrates' Courts for offences of road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences (44% of those adjudicated) and public order offences (9% of those adjudicated);
- Most defendants (461,813 or 85%) were proven guilty (guilty plea or declared guilty);
- For the women proven guilty in the Higher Courts and Magistrates' Courts in 2003-04, 93% received a non-custodial sentence, compared to 87% of men.
- Defendants proven guilty were more likely to receive a custodial sentence in the Higher Courts compared with the Magistrates' Courts (78% and 9% of those proven guilty respectively).

Contact Nick Skondreas on Melbourne (03) 9615 7381 or email nick.skondreas@abs.gov.au.

4905.0.55.001 Mature Age Persons Statistical Profile: Housing, January 2005. Released 21/12/2004.

This profile draws data from the 2002–03 Survey of Income and Housing (SIH) and examines housing characteristics, household income, wealth, and housing costs of the mature age population. In 2002–03, there were 2.6 million households where the reference person was aged 45–64 years (mature age households). A large proportion of mature age households owned their own home (80%) compared with renting (18%). Of households which owned their home, 43% still had a mortgage and 57% were without a mortgage. For households which were renting, 67% were renting from a private landlord and 27% from a State or Territory housing authority.

In 2002–03, the proportion of mature age households which owned their home (with or without a mortgage) varied across States and Territories, from 69% in the Northern Territory to 86% in Victoria. Regardless of tenure, a large proportion of all mature age households in Australia occupied separate houses (84%).

During 2002–03 in Australia, mean (average) weekly disposable household income for mature age persons (45–64 years) living in a private dwelling was \$563, compared to \$510 for all households. Almost three quarters (73%) of reference persons in Australian mature age households were employed, while one quarter (25%) were not in the labour force, and 2% were unemployed.

During 2002–03 in Victoria, the mean weekly housing cost (including rates) for a mature age household that owned its home was \$27 if they did not have a mortgage, and \$232 if they had a mortgage. For those renting privately (excludes rates) it was \$209, and for public renters \$85. Victoria's mature age household mean weekly income was \$580. The publication has 3 tables with state level data.

Contact Maryann Wood on Brisbane (07) 3222 6206 or email <maryann.wood@abs.gov.au>.

4905.0.55.001 Mature Age Persons Statistical Profile: Living Arrangements, February 2005. Released 10/03/2005.

This profile presents information on the family and household structure of mature age persons (those aged 45–64 years). 'Living arrangements' refers to the type of dwelling in which a person lives and the people living within that dwelling. Data is presented on dwellings and structures, people and relationships, and the quality aspects of living arrangements; drawing primarily on Census of Population and Housing data. The publication is entirely Australia level data.

Contact Maryann Wood on Brisbane (07) 3222 6206 or email <maryann.wood@abs.gov.au>.

4905.0.55.001 Mature Age Persons Statistical Profile: Education and Training, March 2005. Released 01/02/2005.

In May 2004, there were a total of 4,692,000 mature age persons (45–64 years) in Australia. Approximately 2,494,000 mature aged persons (over 50% of all mature

age persons) had a non-school education qualification; 789,000 (32%) of whom reported their highest non-school qualification as being Certificate III or V, followed by 558,000 (22%) with a bachelor degree. The most commonly reported qualification fields for mature age males were engineering and related technologies (551,000, 40%), and management and commerce (206,000, 15%); while for mature age females it was management and commerce (292,000, 27%), health (218,000, 20%) and education (188,000, 17%). Some 169,000 (4%) mature aged persons were enrolled in a course of study leading to a qualification, of whom 66,000 (39%) were male and 103,000 female (61%). All data is at Australia level.

Contact Henry Zuk on Brisbane (07) 3222 6061 or email <henry.zuk@abs.gov.au>.

6202.0 Labour Force, Australia, February 2005. Released 10/03/2005.

The trend estimate unemployment rate for Victoria decreased from 6.0% in September 2004 to 5.5% in February 2005. Compared with February 2004 (2,382,800), Victorian trend employment has grown by 83,800 (3.5%) to 2,466,600 in February 2005. This publication presents a detailed table for each state.

Contact Erika Maxim on Canberra (02) 6252 6525 or email <erika.maxim@abs.gov.au>.

6222.0 Job Search Experience, Australia, July 2004. Released 20/01/2005.

This publication presents information about unemployed persons' experiences in seeking work, in terms of steps taken to find work and difficulties encountered. Also presented is information about employed persons who started their current job in the previous 12 months. For this group, data on steps taken to attain work and current job details are provided. Demographic information is provided about both groups.

In Australia during July 2004, there were 528,200 unemployed persons, a 6% decrease since July 2003 and 26% decrease since July 1997. The median duration of unemployment dropped from 26 weeks in July 1997 to 16 weeks in July 2004. In July 2004, almost two-thirds (63%) of unemployed persons reported they were without non-school qualifications, while 11% reported a bachelor degree or above as their highest level of non-school qualification.

During the 12 months prior to July 2004, 1,554,800 employed persons in Australia started their current job. The majority (66%) of these were working full time, 46% reported being without non-school qualifications and 21% reported a bachelor degree or above as their highest non-school qualification.

During July 2004, Victoria had 73,000 unemployed persons, and 189,200 employed persons started their current job in the previous 12 months. The publication has one table with state level data.

Contact Labour Household Surveys Section on Canberra (02) 6252 7206.

SELECTED RECENT RELEASES

6281.0 Work in Selected Culture and Leisure Activities, Australia, April 2004. Released 22/12/2004.

This survey collected information on paid and unpaid involvement in 35 different culture and leisure activities. During the 12 months prior to April 2004, there were 789,900 persons involved in visual art activities in Australia. These included: photography, drawing, computer art and painting. Involvement in other culture activities included: writing (556,500 persons), craft activities (542,700), performing arts (423,900), design (370,200), fete organising (336,500) and music (305,200). Males and females had different levels of involvement in particular culture and leisure activities. The publication contains 3 tables with state level data.

Contact Chris Giddings on Adelaide (08) 8237 7326 or email <chris.giddings@abs.gov.au>.

6285.0 Involvement in Organised Sport and Physical Activity, Australia, April 2004. Released 08/02/2005.

In the 12 months prior to April 2004, an estimated 4.3 million persons aged 15 years and over reported involvement in organised sport and physical activity, representing 27% of persons 15 years and over. Persons involved in organised sport and physical activity included 3.7 million players (23%), as well as 1.5 million (10%) who were involved in a non-playing role such as a coach, umpire or committee member. A higher percentage of males (31%) than females (23%) was involved in organised sport and the 15 to 24 year age group had the highest rate of involvement (39% participating in organised sport or physical activity). The publication contains four tables with state level data.

Contact Mike Stratton on Adelaide (08) 8237 7399 or email <m.stratton@abs.gov.au>.

6310.0 Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership, Australia, August 2004. Released 22/03/2005.

This publication presents results from the Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership Survey conducted throughout Australia in August 2004, as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS). The mean (average) weekly earnings of employees in all jobs was \$766 in August 2004, an increase of 4% (\$32) since August 2003. The median weekly earnings was \$673. Mean weekly earnings were \$997 for male full-time workers and \$819 for female full-time workers.

The most commonly reported leave benefits were paid holiday leave (71% of employees) and sick leave (71%), followed by long service leave (63%) and maternity/paternity (27%). Of the 28% of employees without paid holiday and/or sick leave entitlements in August 2004: 65% were part-time employees, 53% were female, and 25% worked in the retail trade industry. In August 2004, 90% of employees had superannuation provided by their current employer.

In August 2004, there were 1,842,100 employees who were members of a trade union in conjunction with their

main job. The proportion of full-time employees who were trade union members was higher than for part-time employees (25% and 17%, respectively). This product contains several tables with state level data.

Contact Labour Household Surveys Section on Canberra (02) 6252 7206.

Environmental

4618.0 Water Use on Australian Farms, 2002-03. Released 31/03/2005.

This new publication contains information on Australian farm irrigation practices collected in the Water Survey Agriculture, 2002-03. The survey was developed in response to strong demand for nationally consistent information on water use. Data was collected on type and area of crops irrigated, volume of water applied, water entitlements and allocations, sources of irrigation water, irrigation methods, factors influencing changes to irrigation practices and irrigation expenses. Data is available for each State and Statistical Division.

The survey estimated that during 2002-03, Victoria had 33,212 agricultural establishments with 13,413,000 ha of land, of which 12,005 establishments were irrigated to provide 593,000 ha of irrigated land. These establishments applied 2,464,357 ML of water, giving an average application rate of 4.2 ML per ha (averaged across all irrigated pastures and crops). Of the States/Territories, Tasmania reported the highest percentage of agricultural establishments irrigating (48%), and Western Australia reported the lowest percentage (22%). Tasmania also reported the highest proportion of agricultural land irrigated (4.9%), followed by Victoria (4.4%).

Contact Cherie Poulton on Hobart (03) 6222 5983 or email <c.poulton@abs.gov.au>.

General

1301.0 Year Book Australia, 2005. Released 21/01/2005.

Year Book Australia 2005 is a comprehensive source of information about Australia. This issue is accompanied with a CD as a special ABS centenary offer, making it great value for money. Order online at <www.abs.gov.au>, or telephone 1300 135 070.

Contact Dean Souter on Canberra (02) 6252 6400 or email <dean.souter@abs.gov.au>.

9208.0.55.003 Information Paper: Survey of Motor Vehicle Use Review, Final Issues Paper. Released 18/02/2005.

The ABS is conducting a fitness for purpose review of the Survey of Motor Vehicle Use (SMVU). This review is being conducted in response to some ongoing users' concerns with the survey. This report documents users' current issues with the SMVU and is the final output from phase 1 of the review.

Contact Mary-Anne Stewart on Brisbane (07) 3222 6360 or email <mary-anne.stewart@abs.gov.au>.

CLASSIFICATION AND FRAMEWORK ISSUES

1252.0.55.001 National Localities Index, Australia, July 2004. Released 07/02/2005.

The National Localities Index (NLI) has been developed by ABS to assist users assign the Main Structure codes of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) to address based data. The ASGC is the classification used by ABS for the collection and dissemination of geographic statistics, and is an essential reference for users to understand and interpret the geographic content of ABS statistics. Coding data to the ASGC Main Structure allows data to be directly compared to ABS and other information.

NLI editions are released in mid-July and reflect the new ASGC edition which came into effect on the first of that month. NLI updates are usually made available in early November, February and May of each year.

The NLI consists of two parts: a Localities Index and a Streets Sub-Index. The definition of 'locality' is kept very broad to make the NLI as comprehensive as possible. It is defined as a place where people live or work, or say they live or work. The majority of localities are wholly within one Statistical Local Area (SLA) and address data for these localities can be coded to the ASGC using only the Localities Index. The remainder of localities, approximately 5%, cross SLA boundaries. The NLI Streets Sub-Index contains street data for these split localities; name, street types and number range; so that addresses can be coded to their respective SLA. The ABS encourages organisations

to use the ASGC and NLI to improve comparability and usefulness of data with a geographic dimension. The NLI is available as a free download from the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au>.

Contact Alec Bamber on Canberra (02) 6252 5620 or email <alec.bamber@abs.gov.au>.

1279.0 Information Paper: Impact of the Implementation of International Financial Reporting Standards on ABS Statistics, 2005. Released 16/02/2005.

Changes to financial reporting associated with Australia's adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for reporting periods beginning on, or after, 1 January 2005 will have implications for a wide range of data series produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This paper provides information on the timing of, and main changes and possible impacts arising from, the adoption of International Accounting Standards (IASs) that will affect ABS financial statistics. Most ABS macro-economic statistics are based on international statistical standards and frameworks. Every effort will be made to adjust for any IAS adoption impacts in order to maintain a consistent time series in accordance with these statistical standards.

Contact Mike McGrath on Canberra (02) 6252 7967 or email <mike.mcgrath@abs.gov.au>.

OTHER SELECTED RELEASES

Cat. no.		Release date
1346.0.55.001	<i>Information paper: An Introductory Course on Time Series Analysis - Electronic Delivery, January 2005, Electronic publication.</i>	28/01/2005
4905.0.55.001	<i>Mature Age Persons Statistical Profile: Community Life, April 2005.</i>	15/02/2005
6102.0.55.001	<i>Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, January 2005, Electronic delivery.</i>	24/01/2005
6413.0.55.001	<i>Experimental Price Indexes for Financial Services, December Quarter 2004, Electronic delivery.</i>	28/01/2005
6458.0	<i>Information Paper: The Introduction of Hedonic Price Indexes for Personal Computers, 2005.</i>	08/02/2005
6524.0	<i>Information Paper: Experimental Estimates of Personal Income for Small Areas, Taxation and Income Support Data, 1995-96 to 2000-01. New Issue.</i>	24/01/2005
6601.3	<i>Research Paper: Workplace Functions in Regional Labour Markets, Queensland, 1976 to 2001. New Issue.</i>	14/01/2005
7103.0	<i>Information Paper: Agricultural Census: ABS Views on Content and Procedures, 2005-06. New Issue.</i>	24/01/2005
7501.0	<i>Value of Principal Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, Preliminary, 2003-04.</i>	28/01/2005
8129.0	<i>Business Use of Information Technology, 2003-04.</i>	17/03/2005
8155.0.55.002	<i>Australian Industry: Summary of Industry Performance, Australia, Data Report, 2002-03. Excel format data cube.</i>	7/02/2005

Free access to ABS publications. People working in Victorian government agencies and local government offices should be able to access ABS publications at no cost from their desktop PCs using the ABS@ facility. AIHW publications may not be available through ABS@.

ABS@ has:

- all ABS publications from 1998 onwards in pdf format,
- 2001 Community Profiles at all geographic levels,
- time series spreadsheets in Excel format,
- and datacubes in SuperTable format, which allow users to construct tables to suit their requirements.

In local government, the council's extranet coordinator must register a person as a user. In state government agencies, access to ABS@ is through the Victorian state government intranet (or Lotus Notes in some Departments), on the index page using the research and information button; with no registration required.

For further information contact Heather Burns, Manager, ABS Information Consultancy Section on Melbourne (03) 9615 7976 or email <heather.burns@abs.gov.au>. Email is the preferred mode of contact.

ABS STATISTICAL TRAINING

Each ABS office offers practical, informative and relevant training to help you develop your statistical skills. These courses can also be tailored to suit a group's needs or additional programs can be developed as required. This training is primarily targeted to public sector bodies.

What courses are available at ABS Victoria?

- Basic Statistical Analysis
- Basic Survey Design
- Managing Statistical Consultants
- Quality Informed Decisions
- Turning Data Into Information
- Understanding Demographic Data
- Understanding Labour Statistics
- Understanding 2001 Census Data
- SuperTABLE Basics
- CDATA 2001 Introductory

For further information regarding statistical training, nominations and bookings or to discuss your specific training needs, please contact Maxine McDermott on Melbourne (03) 9615 7080 or email <vic.coordination@abs.gov.au>.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Victorian Statistics Advisory Forum (VSAF)

VSAF is a major forum for statistical liaison between Victorian Government Agencies and ABS. VSAF was formerly known as the Victorian Statistics Advisory Committee (VSAC). The following group of departmental representatives meet 3 times each year.

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1. Elect to receive your copy of this newsletter in PDF format by contacting Alan Page on (03) 9615 7899 or email <alan.page@abs.gov.au>. The ABS encourages further dissemination of this newsletter through email, or by its placement on your organisation's intranet.

2. Go to the ABS web site at <http://www.abs.gov.au>. Choose News from the menu bar, then go to Newsletters. You can access current and previous copies of *Statistics Victoria*, as well as many other ABS newsletters.