

Environment & Energy News

**PROVIDING GREATER LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION
IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY
STATISTICS**

Welcome to the third edition of *Environment and Energy News*, the newsletter of the ABS Centre of Environment and Energy Statistics (CEES). *Environment and Energy News* is published twice a year, highlighting developments in environment and energy statistics particularly at the ABS.

ABS Water Account released in November

Water consumption in Australia decreased by nearly 3,000 Gigalitres (GL), or 14%, between 2000–01 and 2004–05, largely due to drought, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures released in the *Water Account, Australia, 2004–05*.

In 2004–05, water consumption in the Australian economy was 18,767 GL, with the agriculture industry consuming almost two-thirds (12,191 GL), households 11% (2,108 GL), water supply industry 11% (2,083 GL), manufacturing 3% (589 GL), mining 2% (413 GL) and electricity and gas 1% (271 GL).

Consumption by agriculture in 2004–05 was down 23% from 2000–01 when it was 14,989 GL. Large falls in water consumption were in rice (from 2,223 GL to 631 GL) and cotton (from 2,896 GL to 1,822 GL), due mainly to smaller planted areas for

these crops in 2004–05 compared to 2000–01. The gross value of irrigated agricultural production in Australia in 2004–05 was \$9.1 billion, down 5% from 2000–01 when it was \$9.6 billion.

Australian household consumption of 2,108 GL was a decrease of 8% from 2000–01 when households consumed 2,278 GL. Household per capita water consumption was also down from 120 kilolitres (kL) in 2000–01 to 103 kL in 2004–05. In 2004 around 16% of households reused or recycled water, an increase from 2001 (11%).

The Water Account was partly funded by the National Water Commission and forms parts of the Australian Water Resources 2005 (AWR 2005) project.

For more information, see: *Water Account, Australia, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4610.0), or contact Adam Sincock: adam.sincock@abs.gov.au, (02) 6252 5436.

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Contents

RECENT RELEASES	2
WORK IN PROGRESS	5
UPCOMING RELEASES	5
NEWS	6
CONTACT US	6

RECENT RELEASES

14 Dec 2006	Experimental Estimates of Regional Water Use, Australia, 2004–05 (cat. no. 4610.0.55.002)
28 Nov 2006	Water Account, Australia, 2004–05 (cat. no. 4610.0)
21 Nov 2006	Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices, March 2006 (cat. no. 4602.0)
10 Nov 2006	Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006 (cat. no. 4613.0)
13 Oct 2006	Water Access Entitlements, Allocations and Trading, Australia, 2004–05 (cat. no. 4610.0.55.003)
12 Oct 2006	Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms, 2004–05 (cat. no. 4620.0)
27 Sept 2006	Characteristics of Australia's Irrigated Farms, 2000–01 to 2003–04 (cat. no. 4623.0)
25 July 2006	Water Use on Australian Farms, 2004–05 (cat. no. 4618.0)

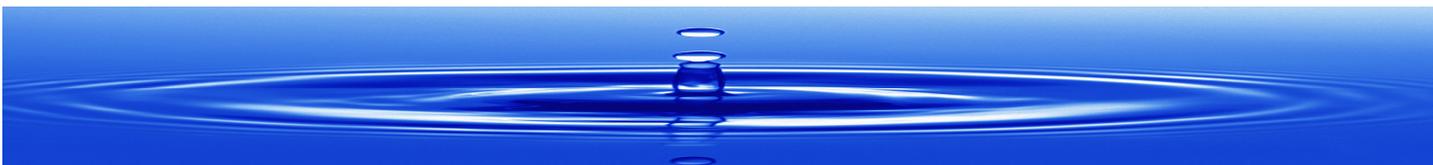
Experimental Estimates of Regional Water Use, Australia, 2004–05

(cat. no. 4610.0.55.002)

Release Date: 14 December 2006

As part of the Australian Water Resources 2005 (AWR 2005) project, the ABS was funded by the National Water Commission (NWC) to model water use data from the *Water Account, Australia, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4610.0) to a lower spatial level; namely, the Water Management Areas (WMAs). The publication *Experimental Estimates of Regional Water Use, Australia, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4610.0.55.002) presents regional water use (consumption) data on 117 individual water management areas and 51 groups of two or more water management areas. It also documents the methodology used to produce the experimental estimates of regional water use (consumption) for WMAs during 2004–05 and the associated explanatory material. This release supersedes the *Proposed Methodology for Producing Regional Water Use Estimates, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4610.0.55.001) released on 18 September 2006.

For more information, see: *Experimental Estimates of Regional Water Use, Australia, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4610.0.55.002), or contact John Ovington: john.ovington@abs.gov.au, (02) 6252 6854.



Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices, March 2006

(cat. no. 4602.0)

Release Date: 21 November 2006

Australians have embraced recycling but are steering clear of public transport. This is the major trend that emerged from the results of the survey presented in *Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices, March 2006* (cat. no. 4602.0), the latest edition released on 21 November 2006. Some of the main findings of the survey can be found at the ABS website.

Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices, March 2006 (ABS cat. no. 4602.0) is an annual publication that provides data on environmental behaviour and practices of Australian households and individuals. The ABS has released 12 editions of this publication since it was first produced in 1992. It is based on an annual survey of approximately 15,000–16,000 private dwellings that collects information from households and individuals on various environmental issues, developed in consultation with users. Topics are rotated every three years and are as follows:

- Energy use and conservation (1994, 1999, 2002, 2005).
- Waste management and transport use (1992, 1996, 2000, 2003, 2006).
- Water source, use and conservation (1994, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007).

A user consultation is conducted a year prior to the implementation of this survey. If you would like to participate or know about the consultation process, contact Apolonio Basilio: apolonio.basilio@abs.gov.au, (02) 6252 7433.

Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006

(cat. no. 4613.0)

Release Date: 10 November 2006

Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006 presents a range of statistics from both ABS and other sources on trends in environmental issues of concern. Each year, a particular environmental issue is addressed in detail - this year it is solid waste. The publication also includes statistics on environmental issues of concern at both the state and territory, and national levels.

The publication's feature article on solid waste looks at the emerging issue of e-waste, a popular name for electronic goods nearing the end of their "useful life". E-waste is one of the fastest growing waste types and the problem of e-waste is global. Australians are some of the highest users of new technology in the world. Ecorecycle Victoria figures show that each year, Australians buy more than 2.4 million personal computers (PCs) and more than one million televisions. However, the stockpile of used, obsolete electronic products keeps growing.

Recycling for all types of waste in Australia has grown over the past 20 years, increasing by 825% between 1996–97 and 2002–03. Recycling was most popular in the Australian Capital Territory where rates of total waste generated for recycling were 69% in 2002–03, followed by South Australia (63%) and Victoria (51%).

For more information, see: *Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006*, (cat. no. 4613.0), or contact Robyn Elphinstone: robyn.elphinstone@abs.gov.au, (02) 6252 5502.

Water Access Entitlements, Allocations and Trading, Australia, 2004–05

(cat. no. 4610.0.55.003)

Release Date: 13 October 2006

Water access entitlements, allocations and trading have been key elements of recent water reforms in Australia, including the 2004 Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Water Initiative. The publication *Water Access Entitlements, Allocations and Trading, Australia, 2004–05* presents data on the number of water access entitlements, the volume of water allocated to water access entitlements, and water trading in Australia in 2004–05, by state and territory and by water management areas. All data were provided by the relevant Government agencies in each State and Territory, or obtained from publicly available sources. This is the first publication to collate and present this information for the whole of Australia, and forms part of the Australian Water Resources 2005, a project funded by the National Water Commission. The main findings in this publication include:

- In 2004–05, there were 223,556 water access entitlements in Australia with a total entitlement volume of 29,831 GL.
- There were 1,802 permanent and 13,456 temporary water trades in Australia in 2004–05 with 248 GL of water traded permanently and 1,053 GL of water traded temporarily.

For more information, see: *Water Access Entitlements, Allocations and Trading, Australia, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4610.0.55.003), or contact Julie McKenzie: julie.mckenzie@abs.gov.au, (02) 6252 5864.

Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms, 2004–05

(cat. no. 4620.0)

Release Date: 12 October 2006

Australian farmers play a key role in the management of natural resources, particularly in relation to land and water resources. The 2004-05 survey was the ABS' first dedicated Natural Resource Management (NRM) survey. The survey asked farmers a range of questions relating to the extent of NRM issues on their land, and the activities undertaken to prevent or manage these issues in five priority areas: weeds, pests, water, land and soil, and native vegetation. The data are presented at national, state/territory and regional (Natural Heritage Trust 2) levels, and by industry. Key findings of the survey include:

- Australian farmers spent \$3.3 billion on natural resource management in 2004–05, a third of which related to management of weeds
- The majority of agricultural establishments (92%) undertook NRM activities

For more information, see: *Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms, 2004-05*, or contact Ron Just: ron.just@abs.gov.au, (03) 6222 5842.



Did you know?

It has been estimated that in Australia, in 2006, there will be around 1.6 million computers disposed of in landfill, another 1.8 million in storage (in addition to the 5.3 million already gathering dust in garages and other storage areas) and half a million recycled.

In fact, electronic waste, or e-waste is estimated to be growing at more than three times the rate of general municipal waste in Australia.

For more information on e-waste and other environmental issues and trends, see *Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006* (cat. no. 4613.0), or contact: Robyn Elphinstone - robyn.elphinstone@abs.gov.au

Characteristics of Australia's Irrigated Farms, 2000-01 to 2003-04

(cat. no. 4623.0)

Release Date: 27 September 2006

This report examined the diversity of farm irrigation practices and management and marked the completion of a successful analytical collaboration between the ABS and the Productivity Commission. The project involved a collaborative effort between staff from various branches in the Productivity Commission and the ABS' Centre of Environment and Energy Statistics and was set up to assess the effectiveness of water use in agricultural activity.

This report provided a detailed statistical description of farms which used and traded irrigation water in the period 2000–01 to 2003–04. It also provided estimates of the contribution of selected irrigated activities to the gross value of Australia's agricultural production. It is intended that the statistical and other descriptive information provided in this report will support wider analyses to identify farm management and resource use practices that contribute to the productivity and efficiency of irrigation water use.

The report found that in 2003–04 irrigated farms generated one-quarter of the gross value of Australia's agricultural production. The gross value of irrigated production was \$9 billion. Irrigated horticulture made up 52% of the gross value followed by irrigated pastures (24%) and irrigated broadacre crops (24%).

The report also found that irrigated farms with a higher value of production were more likely to irrigate in successive years. These farms also incurred lower ongoing irrigation expenses relative to their irrigation water use and were more likely to recycle irrigation water and use irrigation scheduling equipment.

Irrigated farms of all sizes engaged in the trade of irrigation water, although water trading was not undertaken frequently by most farms. Farms with irrigated pastures were the most active water traders, with 43% participating in some form of trade in the three years to 2003-04, compared with 36% for broadacre and 27% for horticulture farms.

More detailed analysis of farm irrigation practices and management is found in *Characteristics of Australia's Irrigated Farms, 2000–01 to 2003–04* (cat. no. 4623.0), or contact Steve May: steven.may@abs.gov.au, (02) 6252 5593.

Water Use on Australian Farms, 2004–05

(cat. no. 4618.0)

Release Date: 25 July 2006

This publication presents information on irrigation practices on Australian farms was first collected in the Water Survey Agriculture 2002–03 and since then has been part of the annual Agricultural Survey. Included in this issue are data on the type and area of crops irrigated, volume of water applied, and sources of irrigation water and irrigation methods. Data are available for each state and statistical division. Comparative estimates are included for some aggregates for 2002–03 and 2003–04.

For more information, see: *Water Use on Australian Farms, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4618.0), or contact Ron Just: ron.just@abs.gov.au, (03) 6222 5842.



Work in Progress

CEES Advisory Board Meeting

The Centre of Environment and Energy Statistics Advisory Board meeting is scheduled to take place in March 2007. These meetings are an annual event and aim to examine the roles and work undertaken in the past year by the CEES workgroups (water, land, energy and environmental issues and views), and to look at the following year's work program. In preparation for the meeting, a series of User Group meetings have been scheduled to enable technical discussion around CEES' work plan. The outcomes of these meetings play a large role in examining the ABS Environment Statistics Work Program during the board meeting.

For more information on the CEES Advisory Board Meeting for 2007, contact Robyn Elphinstone: robyn.elphinstone@abs.gov.au, (02) 6252 5502 or Adam Sincock: adam.sincock@abs.gov.au, (02) 6252 5436.

Upcoming Releases

Domestic Water and Energy Use, New South Wales Release Date: April 2007



This publication will summarise results from the 'Domestic Water and Energy Use' survey, conducted during October 2006 throughout New South Wales.

It will present information on household use of selected water and energy using appliances. Information is collected on cooling and heating devices; washing machines and clothes dryers; showers and waterbeds; and swimming pools and outdoor spas.

For more information, contact Anne Bartlett: anne.bartlett@abs.gov.au, (02) 9268 4154.

Did you know?

More than 9 out of 10 Australian farmers in 2004–05 reported undertaking some form of activity to prevent and/or manage natural resource management activity on their agricultural establishment.

Most (86%) farmers reported having at least one natural resource management issue on their holding, with weeds and pests topping the list.

For more information, see *Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms, 2004–05*, or contact Ron Just: ron.just@abs.gov.au



News

Farewell to CEES Director

At the end of the year Michael Vardon, the first Director of CEES, will be taking leave from the ABS to take up a position on Environmental Accounting with the United Nations in New York. Adam Sincock will be taking over Michael's responsibilities on water, land and energy statistics, while Robyn Elphinstone will be in charge of environmental assets, accounting, waste, environmental protection expenditure, and improving Australia's system of environmental reporting.

We wish Michael the best of luck in his new position.

State of the Environment Report, 2006

The *State of the Environment Report, 2006* was released on Wednesday 6th December by the Department of Environment and Heritage. The report tracks changes in a range of areas including atmosphere, biodiversity, human settlements, inland waters, coasts and oceans, natural and cultural heritage and the Australian Antarctic Territory.

Key environmental achievements that have occurred since 2001 are also outlined, including:

- a four-fold increase in Australian Government spending on the environment;
- massive decreases in land clearing in many states which in turn has had a positive impact on Australia's biodiversity;
- major advances in protection for the marine environment;
- generally good air quality in most capital cities;
- improved water management through the Australian Government's national water reform agenda.

The report also outlines key environment challenges for Australia, including the cumulative impacts of increasing populations on Australia's coastline; the need for continued waste reduction and recycling efforts; the poor condition of land, inland waters and coastal lakes in some parts of Australia; pressures on some of our fisheries; and adapting to the impacts of climate change.



Contact us

The Environment and Energy News features articles and developments in relation to work done within the ABS Environment and Energy program. If you would like to be placed on our free electronic mailing list, please contact Claire Chapman at:

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