



# Stats Talk

Newsletter of the Client Liaison Unit. ABS. Perth

## ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The main aims of this newsletter are to facilitate your involvement in the development and review of ABS social and economic statistics, to provide information on current developments, and to promote discussion on emerging statistical issues.

## CONTACTS

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Issue No.18

July 2006

# Tuesday August 8 The Census is coming!



Census forms being loaded for the start of delivery on July 28.

The 2006 Census was officially launched in Canberra on 24 July to herald the start of the delivery of Census forms nationally on 28 July.

A total of 1.5 million forms will be delivered to one million households in WA by Census Night on 8 August. Collectors are due to pick them all up by 28 August.

In preparation for the Census, over the past few months 3,000 field staff have been recruited throughout the state. The booming economic climate in WA made the recruitment task quite difficult in the far north of the state. Northern District Manager Graham Walker and Perth office staff had to use all their experience to encourage Collectors to join up in the Kimberley and Pilbara.

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### In this issue...

- ◆ View from the Top
  - ◆ Census Update
  - ◆ Training Opportunities
  - ◆ Western Australian Statistical Indicators
  - ◆ Visit by Indonesian Delegation
  - ◆ ABS@
  - ◆ ABS Web site
- 



# View from the Top



Alan Hubbard  
Government Statistician and  
ABS Regional Director,  
Western Australia.

## Community Indicator Frameworks

A key function of the ABS offices located in each state, is to provide statistical support to state government. In recent years state governments generally have become increasingly interested in indicator frameworks which provide measures of the wellbeing of the community as a whole or of important groups and regions within the state. The ABS regional offices have provided support to the development of these indicator frameworks and to the provision of data to "populate" the frameworks.

The nature and extent of this activity has varied across the states depending upon the approach being followed by each state government. For example, in Tasmania the "Tasmania Together" initiative provides a set of objectives and measures of progress across all areas of community interest. In Western Australia, frameworks have been developed for reporting on particular groups such as the Aged (the Active Ageing Benchmark Indicators) and the Indigenous (the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report). Other states are at different stages with different areas of emphasis in their indicator frameworks. The ABS has provided support tailored to the particular needs of each state government.

Recently, the various ABS regional offices met to share experiences in supporting state indicator frameworks, to identify common data requirements and to clarify the future role for the ABS in these initiatives. In reporting on WA activity we noted that, in addition to providing assistance for specific frameworks, ABS was working with state agencies on a more coordinated approach. This project is based on using the ABS@WAGov "consultancy container" to store indicator frameworks with the aim of reducing costs and duplication in effort in maintaining and accessing data across frameworks. Also, the sharing of indicator frameworks and metadata that describes the indicators should lead to improvements in data quality. More information on this project is provided later in this newsletter.

Indicator frameworks which clarify the objectives of government policy and provide objective measures of progress are likely to remain a focus of government interest. The ABS aims to provide ongoing practical assistance with these state government projects.

## Statistical Analysis for the State

In our quarterly publication "WA Statistical Indicators" the ABS aims to provide a comprehensive range of statistics relating to the state population and the economy. In addition to the tables of statistical data the publication includes explanatory articles which provide a statistical perspective on topics of interest. Recent articles have covered the skills shortage in WA and an analysis of youth in regional areas. The article on the skills shortage attracted considerable media attention with some commentary critical of the ABS analysis.

While we strive to be objective in our analytical articles it may be inevitable that articles dealing with current and high profile issues will at times attract contrary views. The ABS mission includes encouraging informed discussion in the community and in this regard it is important that we aim to contribute on important and topical issues.

*Alan Hubbard*

# Census 2006

## Tuesday 8 August

### Census@Schools

A total of 260 schools in WA have been participating in the 2006 Census@Schools program in recent months.

Students complete online questionnaires containing fun questions on subjects such as their height, music tastes, and what they have for breakfast. The numbers are processed and from 11 July, schools will have access to the end data to make comparisons between themselves and other students around Australia.

The program is raising awareness of the 2006 Census as providing students with interesting exercises in Maths, Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) and Human Society and its Environment (HSIE). Suggested assignments include writing reports and presenting them in their English classes.

### Indigenous Launch

Young Indigenous males prove to be one of hardest to reach groups in the Census. In order to help engage these young men, an Indigenous urban launch was held on Tuesday 25 July at Clontarf Aboriginal College. As one of the college's key focuses is football, local Indigenous AFL players will be attending to support the Census cause to 'Stand up and be counted'.



## Growing Up in Australia

On 21 April 2006, ABS Perth was pleased to host a presentation by Carol Soloff, (pictured right), Project Manager for *Growing Up in Australia*, the longitudinal study of Australian Children. Carol works for the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) in Melbourne and was in Perth to help train ABS interviewers for the second wave of data collection for this landmark study.

In 2004, over 10 000 children and families around Australia agreed to take part in this study, which is following the development of these children every two years until at least 2010.

The study is designed to identify policy opportunities for improving support for children and their families, as well as opportunities for early intervention and prevention strategies.

*Growing Up in Australia* was initiated and is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and is conducted in partnership with AIFS with advice from a group of leading researchers from around Australia.

The study is following two cohorts of children: children aged 0-1 years and children aged 4-5 years at first interview. A wide range of information is collected covering child and family health, education, child-care, family functioning, child functioning and socio-demographic variables, from both parents and, where applicable, the child's non-parental carer.



Data from the first wave of the study were released in May 2005, and analysis of the dataset of over 4 000 variables will help to answer questions such as how well Australian children are doing, how their outcomes are linked to the wider environment and what early indicators are linked to particular outcomes.

This dataset is available for a nominal fee to researchers and government agencies approved by (FaCSIA). For further information about accessing this dataset and about *Growing Up in Australia*, visit the AIFS Web site

[www.aifs.gov.au/growing\\_up](http://www.aifs.gov.au/growing_up)

User View  
Katrina Hopkins  
Department of Indigenous Affairs



**Stats Talk: What is your role, Katrina?**

**Katrina:** Principle Planning Officer  
Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA)

**Stats Talk: Where do you work?**

**Katrina:** Head Office, Perth  
Strategic and Business Services

**Stats Talk : What is your role in the organisation?**

**Katrina:** My current role at DIA includes coordination and project management of the *Key Indicators Report : Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage in Western Australia (OID)*. When complete this report and the underlying framework will be used to influence policy development in Indigenous affairs.

**Stats Talk : What ABS statistical information do you use from ABS@?**

**Katrina:** That contained in the OID WA report (as we have tried to report within-WA statistics); and Census data. I look forward to using it more frequently after the next Census when it is expected a lot more data will be uploaded by agencies.

**Stats Talk: What additional information would you find useful if it was available via ABS@ ?**

**Katrina:** All information relating to the WA OID indicators, and WA Indigenous and Non-Indigenous data comparisons by geographic region (old ATSI or LGA, SLA) for health indicators (STIs and other infectious diseases).

**Did you know?**

For a reminder of selected  
New release ABS products

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Present  
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**Population, Policy and Australia's Destiny**

The conference is the showcase for demographers, population geographers, policy makers and planners to discuss contemporary issues relating to population studies.

Highlights and key speakers include:

The W D Borrie Lecture

- ◆ Professor Ian Pool, Professor of Demography, University of Waikato Population & Policy
- ◆ Professor Graeme Hugo, Federation Fellow and Professor of Geographical and Environmental Studies, University of Adelaide
- ◆ Professor Peter McDonald, Professor of Demography and Head of the Demography and Sociology program, Australian National University

And there's more...

**Information on the conference at the  
Australian Population Web site  
<[www.apa.org.au](http://www.apa.org.au)>**

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- ◆ Find ABS Statistics by region
- ◆ Locate new products for Census 2006
- ◆ Download data

**For further information contact Margaret Garner  
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# WA Statistical Indicators (cat no. 1367.5 )

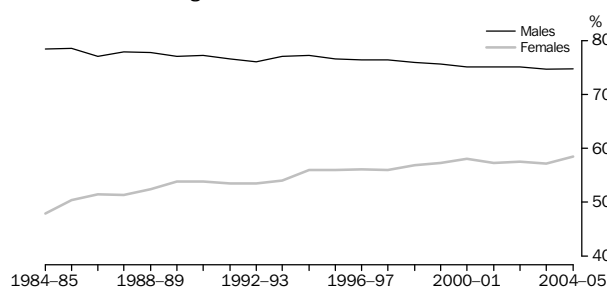
The June edition of Western Australian Statistical Indicators (1367.5) contains three feature articles, all concentrating on Western Australia: Labour Force Trends; results from the 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey; and an analysis of the 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey.

## Labour Force Trends in Western Australia

The labour force in Western Australia has undergone considerable change over the past 20 years. Trends such as greater participation by women in the labour force, rising part-time employment, increasing casualisation and ageing have led to dramatic changes in the composition of the state's labour force. More recently, robust economic growth has stimulated activity in Western Australia's housing and labour markets. This increased activity, coupled with the current resources boom, has led to a strong demand for labour at a time when skilled workers are in short supply. Labour force indicators are currently at record highs or lows.

The WA labour force passed an important milestone in November 2004 when the number of employed persons passed the one million mark. Employment growth rose sharply in 2004-05 with a rise in employed persons of over 40,000. A large reason for this increase in employed persons has been the increased participation of women. Between 1984-85 and 2004-05, the participation rate of women in the state's labour force increased from 47.9% to 58.4%, while the participation rate of men decreased from 78.4% to 74.8%.

PARTICIPATION RATE: Original



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey.



The Western Australian labour force has aged significantly over the past two decades, driven by large increases in the numbers of people in age groups aged 45 years and over. As a result, the proportion of the labour force aged 45 years and over rose from 22.8% in 1984-85 to 35.8% in 2004-05. The ageing of the labour force, as a result of ageing of the population and particularly the working age population, will have an impact on all industries and occupations in Western Australia. Those likely to be most affected are the industries and occupations with a high proportion of mature age workers aged 45 years and older, and include education, agriculture, forestry and fishing, electricity, gas and water supply, health and community services and government administration and defence.

## National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, Western Australia, 2002

The 2002 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) was the second national social survey of Indigenous Australians conducted by the ABS. The first, undertaken in 1994, arose out of the findings of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody*.

The 2002 NATSISS included key areas of social concern such as health, education and employment, family and culture, income and housing, and access to information technology. The ABS plans to conduct a further National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey in 2008.

## National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey, Western Australia, 2004-05

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey collected information relating to Indigenous health including health status, health conditions, health actions taken, and lifestyle factors which may influence health. The survey was conducted between August 2004 and July 2005. The information gathered builds on the Indigenous supplement to the 2001 National Health Survey and some results may also be compared with those from the 2004-05 National Health Survey.

In Western Australia over three-quarters (78%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over considered their health to be 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent'. Although the same proportion of Indigenous people assessed their health as 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' at the state and national level there were differences in the distribution of these ratings. In WA a lower proportion rated their health as 'very good' or 'excellent' (36% compared with 43%) and a higher proportion assessed their health as 'good' (42% compared with 35%). 'Fair' or 'poor' health was reported equally by 22% of Indigenous people in Western Australia and for Australia as a whole.

For further information contact Phil Smythe ☎ 9360 5224 or email:  
<phil.smythe@abs.gov.au>



## New and Recent Releases

### New ABS Small Area Estimates

Users of ABS data often require small geographic regions, where survey sample sizes are often quite low. In response to the increasing user demand for small area estimates, together with practical difficulties in increasing sample sizes, the ABS has been evaluating statistical methods for producing small area estimates and determining their quality.

As part of this evaluation, an empirical study of small area estimates using the 2003 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers was undertaken. The culmination of this work is the Small Area Estimates Manual which has been released on the National Statistical Service website.

The manual will assist in standardising the methods used for small area data requests and improve the quality of the data. The manual draws on ABS experience with the implementation of small area methods, and over time will incorporate further small area exercises. It is also anticipated that a more technical manual will be produced later this year for those interested in the statistical and methodological issues surrounding small area estimation.

The manual provides a guide to the key issues to consider when first consideration is given to undertaking a small area data exercise. These issues include:

- ♦ user's need for small area data;
- ♦ the feasibility of producing data of suitable quality;
- ♦ which technique to use to produce sufficiently reliable estimates (for user's requirements) while being practical and cost effective to implement;
- ♦ validating the small area estimates produced and ensuring their quality; and
- ♦ communicating the quality of small area estimates to users, including the assumptions underpinning the statistical models used.

For further information contact Daniel Elazar

☎(02) 6252 6962 or email

<daniel.elazar@abs.gov.au>

A **Census Inquiry Service** catering for people speaking a language other than English will be available from 28 July.

The **Census Inquiry Service Language Helpline** will operate from:

8:30am to 8:00pm (local time), 7 days a week.

☎1300 363 365

## Regional Statistics with a Difference

The ABS has a commitment of assisting to build statistical capacity in Indonesia. This has been undertaken through a series of assistance measures with BPS (Badan Pusat Statistik).

The previous Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ABS and BPS was signed by the two agencies in April 2004. On 23 June a four man delegation from BPS Indonesia travelled to Canberra to sign a new Memorandum of Understanding.

Enroute they visited the Western Australian office of the ABS to see how a regional office operates since BPS is required to provide reliable statistical information at both the national level and provincial level (there are 33 provinces in Indonesia).



Janet Gunn (Director, Corporate Services) discussing statistical interviewing with Dr Subagio Dwijosumono, Mr Abdul Rachman, Dr Sihar Lumbantobing and Dr Choiril Maksum during the recent visit.



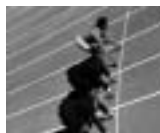
Members of the Indonesian delegation met with the Executive Directors of ABS WA, and shared a traditional Indonesian meal during their visit. Over the next three years AusAID may provide a significant body of assistance to BPS to further enhance collaboration between the two countries.

# About ABS Training Courses

## Basic Statistical Analysis (16 & 17 August)

This two-day computer-based course develops practical skills in basic statistical and graphical data analysis techniques using Excel pivot tables.

It aims to equip participants with the skills to:



- ♦ identify the steps involved in data analysis;
- ♦ summarise and display survey data in graphical and tabular form;
- ♦ find simple relationships in survey data; and
- ♦ test for statistically significant differences between survey results.

The course is particularly suited to those who need to learn how to analyse and describe data that has been collected in surveys. Previous spreadsheet experience is recommended.

## Using SuperTable (14 September)

This half-day computer-based workshop aims to provide participants with the skills to use this powerful software for manipulating multi-dimensional ABS datasets (data cubes). SuperTable software is used to create tables that can be easily converted to Excel format. As the ABS is progressively releasing more data in SuperTable format, users of data cubes will need to be familiar with SuperTable.

This workshop will equip participants with the skills to:

- ♦ access SuperTable;
- ♦ create basic tables; and
- ♦ manipulate data.



The course would be useful for ABS data cube users, especially WA Government employees with access to ABS@ who have little or no experience with SuperTable.

## Making Quality Informed Decisions (19 October)

Understanding quality issues associated with using data sources is important for effective policy-based decision making. This one-day course uses a combination of theoretical instruction and group exercises to illustrate the fundamentals of data quality assessment.

It covers:



- ♦ using a quality framework to determine data needs in the context of policy decision making;
- ♦ evaluating the quality and limitations of data sources; and
- ♦ applying risk management concepts to making informed decisions.

It is suitable for people who analyse and use data from a wide range of sources or wish to improve the quality of their organisation's data collections.

## Turning Data Into Information (15 & 16 November)

This two-day course develops skills in transforming data into meaningful written information, including:



- ♦ understanding how the collection and compilation of data affects its usefulness, quality and relevance;
- ♦ understanding various statistical techniques for use in data analysis;
- ♦ communicating results and writing effective reports; and
- ♦ constructing meaningful graphs and tables

The course is best suited to people involved in using data to produce a reports or social commentary, or with analysing and describing data that has been collected in surveys or through administrative processes.

These courses are all conducted in the Perth ABS Office. If you live outside Perth and you are interested in having a course conducted in your town, please let me know. For any further information about any of these courses, or ABS Statistical Training in general, please **contact Amy Gardos ☎ 9360 5391 or email: <amy.gardos@abs.gov.au>**