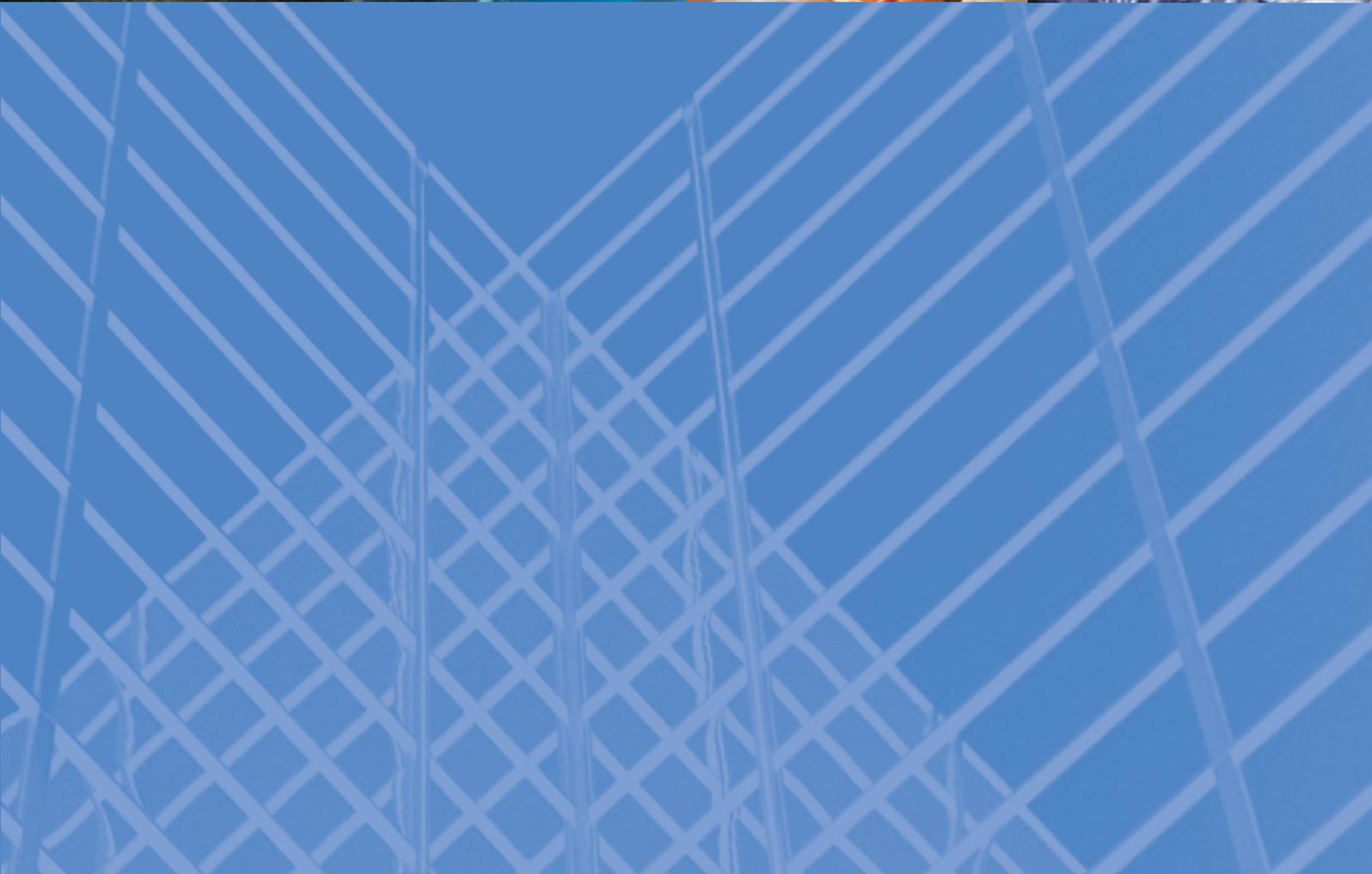




Forward Work Program 2009–10 to 2012–13

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS



Forward Work Program 2009–10 to 2012–13

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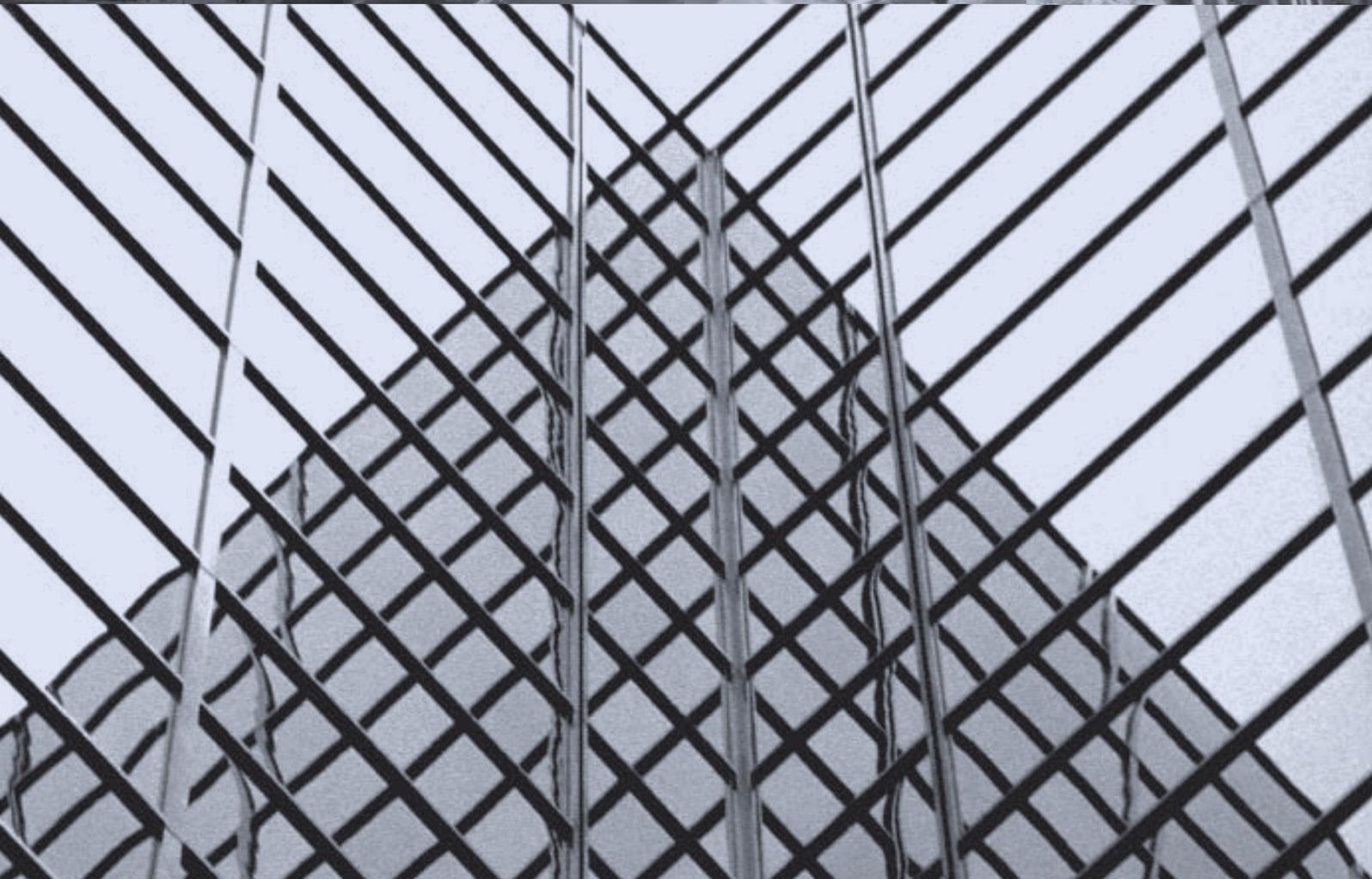


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Preface

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is Australia's official statistical agency. It provides statistics on a wide range of economic, environmental and social matters, covering government, business and the population in general. It also has an important leadership and coordination function with respect to the statistical activities of other official bodies, both in Australia and overseas.

The ABS works with users of statistics to ensure that the statistical information it releases is relevant and timely so as to assist government and the community to make informed decisions for the Australian Community.

The ABS secured an additional \$15m per annum in Government appropriation in the 2009-10 Budget. The increased appropriation enabled the reinstatement of the majority of 2008-09 work program reductions, most notably the reinstatement of the full sample for the Labour Force Survey and the monthly Retail Survey. These decisions were influenced by an extensive user consultation process.

In addition to the increase in the ABS base funding, the ABS has secured additional funding to cover:

1. The creation of a new index to measure the out-of-pocket living costs experienced by households whose principal source of income is derived from a pension or other government benefit
- 2.. To assist in the measurement of progress in reforming human service delivery, using performance indicators in Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Agreements, specifically in the areas of health, disability, education and housing, and
3. An increase in Census field-staff pays to ensure compliance with the new National Employment Standards under the revised workplace relations system.

It was encouraging to see the high degree of support for the ABS through this period, and in particular the recognition of the value of ABS outputs that was demonstrated in the outcomes of the Federal Budget.

The ABS has continued to reassess how to ensure that it has the most effective and efficient structure in place in order to meet the challenges that lie ahead and to ensure our continued relevance within the Australian community. I am confident that the current and planned activities will enable us to balance the achievement of our shorter term goals whilst laying the foundations for the organisation to play a strong, active and leading role within the national statistical service into the future.

This publication describes the strategic directions the ABS will be adopting over the next four years, and the forward work program, which will enable the ABS to deliver statistical and associated services contributing to informed decision making in the Australian community.

Information about the full range of ABS publications and products is provided on the ABS web site <http://www.abs.gov.au>. For assistance in accessing ABS products, contact the National Information Referral Service. See Products and Services (page 14) for information on this service.

Brian Pink

Australian Statistician

August 2009

General Information



Notes to This Publication

Theme pages

The ABS web site contains theme pages that bring together all published ABS statistical information relating to a specific topic or region. These pages provide links to related ABS products and non-ABS statistical information. They may also provide information about ABS collections underpinning the statistical information, and notifications of ongoing statistical matters of interest to users.

Theme pages can be accessed from the ABS web site <http://www.abs.gov.au>. On the home page, select from the list of Themes available in the vertical navigation bar.

Methods and standards

The ABS produces a range of products that describe the concepts, sources and methods used to compile Australia's major economic, environmental and social statistics. These products provide background information that will assist users in analysing and interpreting the statistics, and include standard classifications used in the ABS, for example, industry, occupation, commodity, country, languages, labour force and social classifications.

Methods, classifications and standards are available from the ABS web site <http://www.abs.gov.au>. From the home page, select Methods & Standards on the horizontal navigation bar.

Resources

Resource costs presented in this publication reflect estimates for the four years 2009-10 to 2012-13. These costs present a broad indication of the resources currently allocated to each program and should not be taken as an accurate basis for estimating future allocations – comparisons across programs can therefore be misleading.

The 2009-10 figures are full-year projections based on the agreed budget for the year. Projections for 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 are subject to change, as priorities are reviewed, and new budgets are agreed. These costs reflect all expenditure directly attributable to programs, including salaries, internally charged computing costs and administrative costs.

In addition to the forward estimates, summary information for 2008-09 is also provided. This is provided on the direct cost basis as described above, and also in full cost terms for the statistical programs. The full cost model reflects the total cost for the delivery of the statistical programs once the costs of the infrastructure and services programs, that are essential to enable delivery of the statistical programs, are allocated to the statistical programs based on estimated utilisation of these services and other overhead costs.

Percentage figures show program costs as proportions of the total annual costs.

Staff usage

Staff usage figures comprise full-time staff, and full-time equivalent figures for part-time staff. Inoperative staff are excluded. Staff usage figures are actual outcomes for 2008-09.

Overview of the ABS

ABS Mission

“We assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service”

Census and Statistics Act 1905

- Provides the legislative authority to undertake the Population Census and other statistical collections
- Provides the Statistician with the power to direct a person to supply information
- Requires the ABS to publish the results of its collections
- Imposes strict secrecy provisions on officers of the ABS

Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975

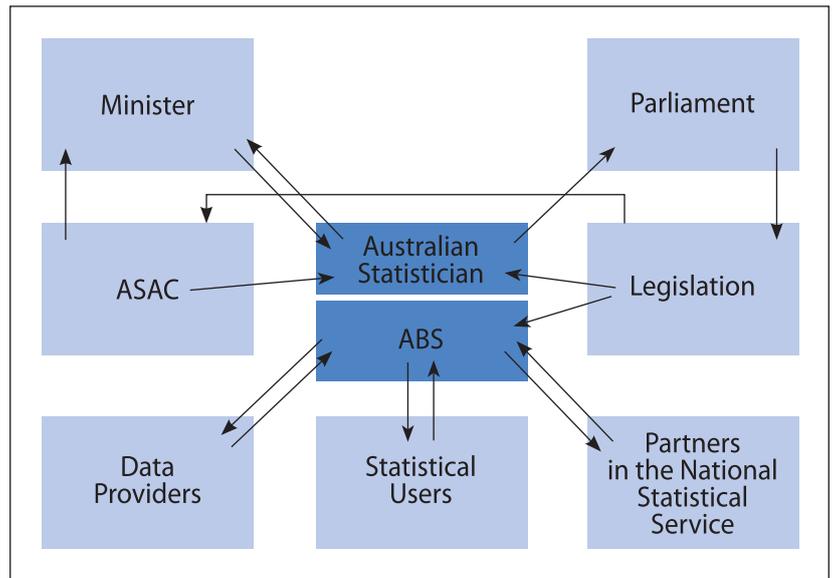
- Established and ensures the independence of both the ABS and the Australian Statistician
- Describes the functions of the ABS
- Requires ABS to advise Parliament of proposals for new collections
- Established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC)
- Requires ABS and ASAC to report to parliament each year

ABS Functions

- To constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and Governments of the States and Territories
- To collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information on a wide range of economic and social matters
- To formulate, and ensure compliance with, statistical standards
- To ensure coordination of the statistical operations of official bodies
- To provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics
- To liaise with statistical agencies of other countries and international organisations

Statistics Users

- Views on statistical activities and priorities are gathered through advisory committees, statistics user groups, discussions with government, business and academics. Views are also invited from the community
- Client management, with bilateral consultation on statistical needs are undertaken with key users
- Market research into statistics users' requirements



Australian Statistics Advisory Council

Advises the Minister and Statistician on:

- the improvement, extension and coordination of statistical service provided for public purposes in Australia
- annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be undertaken by the ABS
- any other matters relating to those statistical services

Corporate governance – Key Fora

- Australian Statistics Advisory Council
- ABS Management meetings
- Executive Leadership Group meetings
- Senior Management Group meetings
- Protective Security Management Committee
- Audit Committee

Core Values

- Integrity
- Service
- Professionalism
- Relevance
- Trust of providers
- Access for all

Corporate Plan Objectives

- An expanded and improved national statistical service
- ABS services that are timely, relevant, responsive and respected for their integrity and quality
- Informed and increased use of statistics
- A key contributor to international statistical activities that are important to Australia or our region
- An organisation that builds capability to continually improve its effectiveness
- The trust and cooperation of our providers
- ABS is a respected and strongly supported organisation

Corporate Plan

The ABS Corporate Plan is a key part of the strategic planning process. The plan describes our working environment and outlines our mission and values. It describes the objectives the ABS will pursue to fulfil its mission over the next 3 to 5 years and the strategies we will adopt. It sets out the directions we want the ABS to take to meet our future challenges.

The statement of mission, values, objectives and related strategies in the corporate plan provides the higher level framework within which the rolling ABS forward work program has been developed, and future work programs will be developed. It provides the broad context for ensuring we use our resources effectively and efficiently.

The key components of the ABS Corporate Plan are outlined below. These provide a useful reference to operational objectives and strategies of ABS programs set out on the following pages.

Mission

We assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community, by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

Values

The ABS and its staff uphold the APS Values and Code of Conduct. ABS values, which are congruent with the APS values, are material to our role as an independent provider of statistical information for Australia. Our values are:

- integrity
- service
- professionalism
- relevance
- trust of providers
- access for all.

The ABS values encompass what we believe, and shape how we behave. The ABS values its staff and has obligations to them; staff in turn have obligations to the ABS.

Objectives

To achieve the ABS mission, the ABS has the following objectives:

- 1 an expanded and improved National Statistical Service
- 2 ABS services that are timely, relevant, responsive, and respected for their integrity and quality
- 3 informed and increased use of statistics
- 4 a key contributor to international statistical activities that are important to Australia or our region
- 5 an organisation that builds capability to continually improve its effectiveness
- 6 The trust and cooperation of our providers
- 7 ABS is a respected and strongly supported organisation.

How the ABS work program is determined

The Australian Statistician is responsible for determining the ABS work program. The work program must align with the ABS' mission, its legislative mandate and its values.

What the ABS does

The legislated functions of the ABS are described in detail on page 13.

In summary, its functions are to:

- be the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and to provide statistical services for state/territory governments
- collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information
- coordinate the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information in order to promote data comparability, avoid duplication and maximise the utilisation (for statistical purposes) of information available to these bodies
- set and promote statistical standards
- provide assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics, and
- provide liaison between Australia and other countries in relation to statistical matters

The ABS seeks to provide a reasonable level of service across all its legislated functions. This is achieved through the core components of the ABS work program as listed below.

Core components of the ABS work program

Developing and maintaining the capacity and capability for collecting, integrating, compiling, analysing and disseminating economic, social and environment statistics.

This includes developing and maintaining:

- conceptual frameworks, statistical classifications and taxonomies, business and other registers
- methodological expertise in collection design, compilation, analysis and presentation of statistics
- the expertise, business processes and systems required to:
 - conduct postal, electronic and interviewer based business and household surveys
 - capture and integrate data sourced from administrative records and transaction databases
 - protect the security and confidentiality of identifiable data and pre-released statistics
 - compile, analyse, publish, explain and provide broad public access to quality assured statistics.

A program of quality national macro-economic statistics, consistent with agreed international standards, and founded on robust source data that meets the economic policy requirements of the Australian Government, and supports the public accountability of that policy.

National and International Accounts and essential source data, Consumer Price Index and Government Finance Statistics are the core elements of this program.

A program of quality social, demographic, labour, industry and environment statistics, consistent with agreed international standards and founded on robust source data to support government policy and service delivery, and supports the public accountability of that policy and service delivery.

Core elements of this program include quarterly state population estimates, the quinquennial Censuses of Population and Housing, sub-annual employment and unemployment statistics, a regular program of industry statistics (including agricultural statistics), household-based collections of data about income, expenditure and wealth, and a rolling program of household surveys to inform on health, education, welfare, crime and justice, and Indigenous issues complemented by a coordinated system of administrative based statistics.

Core components of the ABS work program – continued

An analytical and reporting program where the ABS can add unique value including analysis and reporting that:

- involves access to detailed unit record information that, for legislated confidentiality reasons, cannot be made available to other organisations
- leverages the ABS' statistical and collection expertise, including the capability to bring together diverse data sets to maximise the statistical benefit from them.

Statistical leadership – in partnership with others – that maximises the value of statistical, administrative and other information that can inform official statistics irrespective of the original data source:

- promoting and facilitating:
 - statistical standards, frameworks and classifications to ensure comparability
 - the strategic use of administrative data for statistical purposes
 - sound statistical practices in other agencies
 - the minimisation of costs and provider load by eliminating duplication and misdirected efforts.
- providing infrastructure and support for statistical activities in other agencies. The appendix sets out the core components of the ABS work program to achieve this.

How the ABS balances its work program

The ABS does not have the resources to undertake all of the activities that fall within its mandate and which users would ideally require.

In balancing the ABS' program of collection and other activities, the Statistician seeks to ensure that ABS' resources are used to the maximum benefit of governments and the broader community. In assessing this, the ABS takes account of the value of the information being sought, the extent to which the ABS undertaking the activity is consistent with its legislated mandate and with community expectations, and the costs that the activity would impose upon the ABS and the broader community.

In assessing the value of the information, the ABS takes account of:

- the importance of the issue from a public policy and/or community interest perspective
- the views of Australian and state/territory government agencies
- the depth and breadth of user interest in the wider community
- the opinions of recognised experts in the field
- the extent to which the information would impact on decision making (as judged from history or from understanding the decision making processes), and
- any international reporting obligations

In assessing the extent to whether the ABS undertaking the proposed activity would be consistent with its legislative mandate and community expectations, the ABS takes account of:

- any specific legislative obligations on the ABS to undertake the activity
- the statistical measurability of the issue, including the ability to provide information that is 'fit for purpose'
- the extent to which other available sources of information, both other ABS and non-ABS, could be used to inform decision making
- the extent to which the ABS' independent voice of authority and the ABS power to collect information is required
- in determining the timing and frequency of the activity, the decision making time-frames and the expected rate of change in the information sought, and
- the level of community support to provide the required information.

In assessing the cost of the activity, the ABS takes account of:

- the full cost to the ABS of undertaking the collection activity
- the capacity and capability of the ABS to undertake the collection activity
- the workload and other costs imposed on providers, and
- the sensitivity of the information and the ABS' requirement to maintain the trust of providers

How the ABS understands client needs

The ABS determines future priorities by consulting and planning with users of statistics. These consultations are a key input to decisions on the scope, content and frequency of statistical collections.

Consultation takes place through the ABS organised statistics user groups; direct discussion with Australian, state and local government agencies, academics, industry bodies, non-government and community organisations etc.; and the release of information or discussion papers inviting comment.

Consultations cover both the need for data on new or emerging topics, and the need for changes to existing data collections including discontinuing some series. Contact with consulted groups continues throughout the statistical cycle to keep them informed on progress and as a check that developments towards statistical outputs remain on track to meet survey objectives.

The overall shape of the proposed work program and estimates of resources required to deliver it are considered by the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC).

A list of user groups is provided in the appendix.

User funded activities

The ABS core work program which is funded by direct government appropriation to the ABS, can be extended by way of user funded activities. The ABS undertakes user funded work where:

- the work is consistent with the ABS' mission, legislative mandate and values
- the work itself, or the related funding arrangements, does not 'crowd out', compromise public support for, or otherwise put at risk the core work program
- there is demonstrable value in the activity, the ABS undertaking the activity would make a difference, and the costs imposed on providers is acceptable
- the ABS has the capability and capacity to undertake the work, and
- the work is fully cost recovered

The ABS has full control over all aspects of the work, including ownership of statistics created from it.

How the ABS Operates

Introduction

The ABS produces and disseminates statistics under the following broad programs:

- Macroeconomics and Integration Statistics
- Population, Labour, Industry and Environment Statistics, and
- Social Statistics

These areas of statistics involve extensive data collection through censuses and surveys and from administrative data sources.

The statistical programs are supported by service areas, which deliver assistance and advice on statistical methods, data and metadata arrangements, information technology, client management, dissemination, human resources and other corporate services.

The ABS has a central office in Canberra and regional offices located in the eight state and territory capitals. Regional offices are responsible for the delivery of statistical services to their state or territory. Additionally all regional offices, apart from the ACT office, have some responsibilities for national operations for particular statistical activities.

The statistical collection process

While business and household survey programs are generally run separately, they are characterised by common statistical principles and many similar procedures. The statistical process involves a range of statistical operations, from developing specifications for statistics based on user information needs through to the delivery of data and support to clients.

The diagram below presents a typical survey cycle. It distinguishes between a core set of tasks and activities which form the three broad stages of the statistical collection process, and two overarching functions which ensure that ABS products, processes and services are of high quality and contribute to achieving corporate objectives and delivering on the ABS mission.



Functional areas undertaking statistical operations

Once statistical priorities have been set, through consultation and planning with statistics users, the ABS sets up arrangements for data collection, processing and analysis. Data collection activities include survey dispatch, data receipt and follow-up of non-response. Data may be collected directly from providers through surveys or censuses, or indirectly by accessing data collected by other organisations, particularly Australian, state and territory administrative agencies. The processing stages of the cycle cover data entry; checking individual records for completeness, consistency and accuracy; producing aggregate survey results; checking consistency and validity of aggregated data and preparing data for public release.

The final stage of the statistical cycle covers data communication and decision support. A key objective for the ABS is to maximise the informed use of ABS and non-ABS statistics by increasing the visibility of, and access to, statistics, optimising the mix of dissemination channels, and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of information service delivery. To achieve this, a range of products and delivery options have been developed, with a focus on meeting the needs of ABS clients. Several areas support these activities, including market research, website publishing and development, a telephone enquiry service, delivery of customised products and working with various sectors to improve statistical literacy. See also the Dissemination and Pricing Policy (page 16).

The statistical operations of each stage of the cycle are undertaken by a range of specialist areas. Other specialist areas have responsibility for ensuring that the broader objectives of managing quality and processes, and delivering statistical leadership, are achieved. The key organisational areas and functions that are involved in the statistical collection and dissemination processes are described below.

National Statistics Centres (NSC) provide statistical leadership, internally and externally, for each field of statistics. NSC responsibilities include: establishing and maintaining close links with key external clients and ensuring the ABS understands and satisfies their needs for data; providing leadership in the development of statistics within and outside the ABS; maintaining knowledge of current and emerging policy issues and debates, and assessing potential statistical impacts; understanding and awareness of important national and international statistics relating to these issues; and complex analytical work, which often draws on multiple information sources. NSC also participate in the development of survey proposals and survey outputs, including dissemination strategies.

Business Statistics Centres (BSC) are responsible for data collected from businesses. The BSC are responsible for the specification of output requirements to meet user needs and for determining appropriate collection methodologies for their specific subject matter. BSC undertake more complex editing functions, analysis and preparation of survey-specific commentary and articles. They are the main contact point for data users, to help users interpret survey results for regular releases of ABS statistics in their field. Other responsibilities of BSC include: data quality assurance, including the specification of data quality requirements to the Integrated Collection Branch (see below); and the consistent application of existing or new statistical frameworks, classifications, standards and concepts.

For household surveys, **Household Survey Centres (HSC)** project manage the survey process. HSC manage consultation with relevant statistics users, develop survey objectives, prepare survey proposals and develop survey content. To support their data collection activities, HSC develop and maintain survey-specific classifications and coding systems. In association with Methodology and Data Management Division, they ensure appropriate sample design and collection methodologies are developed. HSC are responsible for quality assurance of all aspects of the survey. They develop dissemination strategies, manage the delivery of the initial publications and other outputs from each collection, and coordinate evaluation of the survey process.

The **Integration Collection Branch** (ICB) provides an integrated data collection service for the ABS across business, household and administrative data collections, including through the utilisation of a professional panel of home and office based interviewers. For business data collection, an important role of the ICB is the maintenance of survey frames. These are lists of Australian businesses that include details on contacts, structure and type of operations. It is from these frames that businesses are selected to participate in ABS surveys. The primary source of frames for economic surveys is the ABS Business Register. Population survey frames are based on the dwellings recorded in the most recent Census of Population and Housing, conducted five-yearly by the ABS. Other business survey functions of ICB include: sample selection; questionnaire development and testing; questionnaire dispatch; data collection, including administrative data; basic checks for completeness of responses; non-response follow-up; handling of provider complaints; and key provider management. For household surveys, the ICB is responsible for sample generation and maintenance; interviewer recruitment, training and management; survey interviewing, data capture and coding of data collected; and provision of survey management information and performance reporting.

Several programs within the ABS provide the infrastructure necessary for undertaking data collection and producing official statistics. This infrastructure comprises the concepts, classifications, standards, survey methodology and information technology systems, which support the statistical process.

Methodology and Data Management Division (MDMD) has specific responsibilities for supporting the statistical collection process. MDMD provides advice on survey design, methods and on data quality through all stages of the survey cycle. The Division ensures ABS surveys are based on sound statistical principles and practices and that the statistics produced best meet survey design objectives, while maintaining data confidentiality. MDMD undertakes research on statistical methods to improve the efficiency and accuracy of ABS work, and provides leadership and support in the development, review and application of statistical classifications. Within MDMD, the **National Statistical Service Leadership Branch** undertakes a range of statistical leadership activities aimed at increasing the understanding and use of statistics by government, research organisations and the wider community. The **Data Management and Classifications program** provides important support functions that underpin the ABS mission. The program is responsible for promoting the comparability, integration and quality of ABS statistics, through the use of standard concepts, definitions, classifications and procedures. It is also responsible for the infrastructure used to hold key definitional metadata and to store statistical data from which ABS outputs are sourced.

The Corporate Services Division (CSD) is responsible for recruitment, development and retention of the workforce needed to deliver the ABS work program; for the provision of leadership in driving cultural change; and for ensuring staff have a healthy, safe and functional working environment. Within CSD, **The Office of the Statistician** is responsible for key corporate functions that support the Australian Statistician's administrative and statistical roles. The Office manages: relationships with key external stakeholders including the Minister, the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) and the media; corporate governance activities including compliance with legislation under which the ABS operates; ABS's international activities; and strategic and work program planning and budget allocation. The functions and responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer are also included in CSD operations.

Technology Services Division (TSD) provides ABS staff with stable, reliable, and secure information technology infrastructure, including hardware, software and network facilities. TSD maintains systems to ensure they are efficient, timely and relevant and assists other areas of the ABS to improve efficiency and effectiveness in their use of those systems. They also develop specialised software to support ABS statistical processes. The Division undertakes systems analysis and design, specialist programming services and provides advice on new and developing information technologies.

Corporate governance

ABS corporate governance arrangements ensure transparency in decision making, operation and accountability by promoting strong leadership, sound management and effective planning and review processes.

The Office of the Statistician has an important role as a focal point for ABS corporate governance. It supports the effective operation of governance forums, ensures that the ABS operates within the scope of its authority and legislative basis, and manages ABS audit, review and risk management activities.

Some of the key ABS corporate governance mechanisms are described below:

- a planning cycle to ensure that the ABS work program reflects current and emerging statistical priorities of users, and is consistent with the ABS mission and overall strategic directions
- senior management committees involved in developing policies and strategies, identifying priorities and monitoring ABS' performance
- advisory bodies and user groups, which enable the ABS to consult widely with the user community about the ABS work program
- a risk management framework to assist in identifying and managing risks at organisational, operational and project level
- an audit and review program covering different facets of ABS operations, overseen by the Audit Committee
- instructions and manuals to ensure staff have access to ABS policies and practices.

Four year planning and budgeting cycle

The four year planning and budgeting cycle clearly sets out the work program and total resources (including finances and staff) required to deliver the approved work program. This ensures a budget and planning process that is more rigorous and forward looking in a way that brings about genuine alignment between work program and the available budget. The ABS is working towards an integrated framework for budgeting and planning which cascades from strategic priorities to divisional priorities and activities.

Senior management committees

An important feature of ABS corporate governance is the role played by senior management committees, which are active in developing policies and strategies, identifying ABS priorities, assessing and responding to risks and opportunities, and monitoring ABS performance.

The major senior management committees are as follows:

- ABS Management Meetings

The Management Meetings play a major role in determining ABS strategic directions, priorities and resource allocations. These meetings are chaired by the Australian Statistician and attended by the Deputy and First Assistant Statisticians, the Regional Directors, Chief Financial Officer and the Assistant Statistician of the Office of the Statistician. The Management Meeting is held twice a year, and supports the development of ABS strategic directions, considers planning and budgeting issues, and discusses issues of corporate importance.

- Executive Leadership Group Meetings (ELG)

The Executive Leadership Group Meetings are held fortnightly and provide strategic oversight of the ABS and determine ABS policy. It ensures that proper attention is given to strategic issues that affect the future of the organisation, including giving high-level focus to the National Statistical Service and strategic client engagement. The ELG Meetings are chaired by the Australian Statistician and the other members are the three Deputy Statisticians.

- Senior Management Group Meetings (SMG)

Senior Management Group Meetings are held weekly to provide tactical management oversight of the ABS' operations and to advise the ELG on strategic and policy issues. It ensures the ABS is a well-run organisation with well formulated work programs that are reviewed appropriately and with proper consideration of cross-cutting issues. It will also address other issues including, information resource management, publishing and dissemination, human resources and accountability issues. SMG Meetings are attended by the First Assistant Statisticians, two Regional Directors (on a rotating basis), Chief Financial Officer and the Assistant Statistician of the Office of the Statistician, with other attendees as required for particular items. Approximately four times a year the ELG and the SMG will meet jointly to discuss strategic and policy issues and to review a set of Key Performance Indicators that have been defined to measure the main areas of organisational performance.

- Protective Security Management Committee

The ABS maintains a comprehensive security framework, overseen by a Protective Security Management Committee chaired by a Deputy Australian Statistician. This security framework ensures that both physical and computer security are maintained. The committee is a key means of ensuring that the ABS meets its legal requirement not to divulge identifiable information and to make sure that there is policy to meet the security and privacy related requirements of legislation including the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, *Privacy Act 1988* and *Crimes Act 1914*.

Audit, review and risk management

- Risk Management Framework

The ABS has a robust Risk Management Framework, which provides the basis for identifying, assessing and mitigating risks at all levels within the organisation. The framework is set out in the ABS' Risk Management Strategy. The strategy and framework undergo continuous review, based on feedback from many sources including internal audits, external risk reviews, best practice guides, and the outcomes of the annual Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking exercise.

A major initiative for 2008-09, was the stronger integration of risk identification and prioritisation within the ABS business planning cycle. In developing their business plans, managers at all levels were expected to identify key risks to work programs. Significant risks identified at section level were elevated or integrated into business plans at Branch and Division level to provide a more comprehensive and consistent picture of the ABS risk profile. In 2009-10, further emphasis will be placed on ensuring that this hierarchy is used to support the consistent reporting on risk mitigation and risk acceptance across the ABS.

On an annual basis, the ABS identifies strategic risks that have the potential to significantly impact on the organisation. These are known as enterprise risks. In 2007-08, a major revision of the risk management framework resulted in the ABS updating its approach to managing these risks, with 2008-09 being the first year this new approach was in place. The key benefit has been a strengthening of risk identification and analysis through a more coordinated examination of organisational threats by the ABS Executive. The updated approach has also provided for clearer ownership of risk mitigation responsibilities and an increased opportunity for the Executive to review the success of risk mitigation.

- Audit Committee

The ABS Audit Committee provides assurance to the Australian Statistician that: a comprehensive control framework is in place and is working effectively for all business systems; the operation and management of ABS systems are sufficiently adequate to ensure the ABS complies with all its legislative and other obligations; and externally published information generated by these systems conforms with legislative and other obligations. The committee identifies significant issues of concern or non-compliance. The ABS Audit Committee is chaired by a Deputy Australian Statistician, and comprises four other ABS officers chosen for their personal qualities, experience and skills including their ability to demonstrate independence on matters before the Committee. The Committee includes two experienced external members. The Audit Committee meets four times a year and reports to the executive meetings as appropriate.

Authority and legislation

The principal legislation determining the functions and responsibilities of the ABS is contained in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* (ABS Act) and the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* (C&S Act).

The functions of the ABS are defined in section 6 of the ABS Act as follows:

- (a) to constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian government and, by arrangements with the governments of the states, provide statistical services for those governments;
- (b) to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information;
- (c) to ensure coordination of the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information, with particular regard to:
 - (i) the avoidance of duplication in the collection by official bodies of information for statistical purposes
 - (ii) the attainment of compatibility between, and the integration of, statistics compiled by official bodies, and
 - (iii) the maximum possible utilization, for statistical purposes, of information, and means of collection of information, available to official bodies;
- (d) to formulate, and ensure compliance with, standards for the carrying out by official bodies of operations for statistical purposes;
- (e) to provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics, and
- (f) to provide liaison between Australia, on the one hand, and other countries and international organisations, on the other hand, in relation to statistical matters.

The ABS Act also established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC). The functions of ASAC are to advise the Minister and the Statistician in relation to:

- (a) the improvement, extension and coordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia
- (b) annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services, and
- (c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services.

All state and territory governments are represented on ASAC. The other Council members are chosen to represent a broad cross-section of perspectives, covering government, business, academic and community interests.

The C&S Act provides the Statistician with the authority to conduct statistical collections and, when necessary, to direct a person to provide statistical information. The Act imposes on the ABS obligations to publish and disseminate compilations and analyses of statistical information, and to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act.

The ABS Act requires that the Statistician prepares, for presentation to parliament, an annual report on the operations of the Bureau. The ABS Act also requires that ASAC prepares, and submits to the Minister for presentation to the parliament, a report relating to the matters connected with the operation of the Act.

Under the *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*, Commonwealth and state statistical services have been integrated since 1958 (since 1924 for Tasmania). Although not covered by legislation, similar arrangements apply in both territories. There is regular consultation with state and territory governments on statistical priorities.

Products and Services

Statistical releases

ABS releases comprise monthly, quarterly, annual, biennial and less frequent as well as irregular publications and products. In each year, there are over 700 statistical releases. The full range of publications and products is available through the ABS website and a small number of publications are available in paper format.

Electronic products and data services

The ABS' principal means of releasing statistical information is through the ABS website. The ABS' electronic services include:

- the ABS website <http://www.abs.gov.au>, which provides free access to the full range of electronic publications and ABS statistics, as well as news, media releases, directories, technical material and information about the ABS
- Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURF), which are compiled from ABS surveys and released on CD-ROM for analysis by researchers
- the Remote Access Data Laboratory which provides access to more detailed data than can be made available on CD-ROM for analysis of ABS data by researchers, while ensuring the confidentiality of individual survey respondents
- international trade services, which provide detailed, customised trade data on both an ad hoc and regular subscription basis
- database products, which provide large volumes of detailed statistical data such as Census data packs, CDATA Online and Census Table Builder
- a free email notification service providing details of, and access to, ABS daily releases in subject areas nominated by clients
- Really Simple Syndication (RSS) news feed allowing subscribers to access ABS statistical headlines from their desk top.

Statistical Literacy Program

The Statistical Literacy Program assists and encourages the effective use of statistics for informed decision making by developing the statistical literacy of key target groups within the community. This is achieved through the development of initiatives and innovative approaches to improve the statistical capabilities of the key target groups based on the content and context of their statistical literacy needs. The target groups include school students, tertiary students (including vocational education and university students, and teachers/lecturers), opinion leaders (including journalists), decision makers (including members of parliaments and staff from agencies in all levels of government) and the general community (including small business owners and community groups). Disadvantaged groups such as Indigenous Australians, or people with a disability, are present across all five target groups, and the Program comprises initiatives specifically focussed on addressing their specialised needs.

National Information and Referral Service (NIRS)

The National Information and Referral Service (NIRS) is the main professional entry point to the ABS for basic telephone, email, and facsimile enquiries from clients. The NIRS also provides a referral service to clients, referring inquiries that cannot be met by the NIRS or self-help facilities to other parts of the ABS for servicing. Contact details for NIRS are listed on page 17.

Information and Statistical Consultancy Services

More detailed statistics than those initially released on the website are available on request. Requests for additional statistical data are met through the Information Consultancy Service which is provided on a cost recovery basis.

The Statistical Consultancy Service provides assistance to government departments and statutory authorities in areas such as survey design, questionnaire design, sampling techniques and data analysis.

User funded surveys

The ABS conducts user funded surveys that are consistent with its role as a national statistical agency. Survey results are publicly disseminated, not just made available to the client providing the funding.

Other services

The ABS provides a number of specialised cost-recovered services to meet the specific needs of clients, including:

- ABS employees who are outposted to other government agencies to support strategic engagement between the ABS and those agencies, as well as outpostings on a project basis to provide advice on statistical issues
- seminars and training on statistical issues.

Dissemination and Pricing Policy

Policy and principles

The Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines stipulate that a basic set of information products and services, funded by the taxpayer, should be provided to the community free of charge as 'public goods' and other information, products and services beyond the basic information set should be cost recovered. Consistent with this policy, the ABS dissemination principles ensure that:

- all users, including the general community, have free and easy access to a basic set of official statistics
- where it is cost effective to do so, the costs of producing and providing information products and services that are additional to the basic set of official statistics are recovered from the users of these additional products.

Objectives

The objectives of the ABS charging policy are to:

- reduce the need for the general taxpayer to bear those elements of the cost of the statistical service which have a specific and identifiable value to particular users
- rationalise use of ABS products and services
- enable the demand for ABS products and services to be used as an indicator of how ABS resources should be used.

Community service obligation

The ABS fulfils the community service obligation for statistics by:

- including all published ABS information in the basic set, which is available for access on the ABS website, free of charge
- providing publications available in paper format free of charge to approximately 550 libraries as part of the ABS' statistical literacy program
- offering a National Information and Referral Service.

Approaches to cost recovery

Products in the basic set may be provided in alternative formats on request by the user. Pricing is based on the marginal costs incurred in producing them in these formats, for example, the costs to the ABS to print and despatch a hard copy of materials to users, or access to Confidential Unit Record Files.

For products beyond the basic set, such as customised extraction of data, pricing is based on incremental (or avoidable) costs. The ABS may also price a limited range of products on a commercial basis. This occurs where such products and services compete, or may compete, with similar products provided by others.

Secondary providers of customised ABS data are charged a licence fee, which is priced to recover the incremental costs of administering these licenses. In addition, they are required to sign a licensing agreement. This arrangement requires them to purchase the data they wish to provide under standard ABS pricing arrangements.

Contacts

For information about the Forward Work Program

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For information about the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC)

Gillian Nicoll
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Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Telephone (02) 6252 5533
Email: gillian.nicoll@abs.gov.au
Internet address
<http://www.abs.gov.au>

For statistical information

National Information and Referral Service
Telephone: 1300 135070
Facsimile: 1300 135211
Email: client.services@abs.gov.au
Mail: Client Services, ABS
GPO Box 796
Sydney NSW 2001

For general information

Central Office, Canberra

Telephone: 02 6252 5000
Facsimile: 02 6252 5566
Mail: Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Counter: ABS House
45 Benjamin Way, Belconnen

New South Wales Office

Telephone: 02 9268 4111
Facsimile: 02 9268 4138
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Counter: 5th Floor, St Andrew's House
Sydney Square, Sydney

Victorian Office

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Facsimile: 03 9615 7387
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Melbourne Vic. 3001
Counter: CGU Tower
485 La Trobe Street, Melbourne

Queensland Office

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Facsimile: 07 3222 6250
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Counter:
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South Australian Office

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Facsimile: 08 8237 7366
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Facsimile: 08 9360 5950
Mail: GPO Box K881
Perth WA 6842
Counter: Level 15, Exchange Plaza
2 The Esplanade, Perth

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Telephone: 03 6222 5999
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Hobart Tas. 7001
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200 Collins Street, Hobart

Northern Territory Office

Telephone: 08 8943 2100
Facsimile: 08 8981 1218
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Darwin NT 0801
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Darwin NT 0800

Australian Capital Territory Office

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Mail: Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616
Counter: Ground Floor
ABS House
45 Benjamin Way, Belconnen

Top Structure

Australian Statistician



Brian Pink

Deputy Australian Statisticians



Ian Ewing
Macroeconomics
and Integration



Peter Harper
Population, Labour,
Industry & Environment
Statistics



Trevor Sutton
Social Statistics

First Assistant Statisticians



Bronwyn Driscoll
Macroeconomics



Denis Farrell
Population &
Environment Statistics



Garth Bode
Social Statistics



Siu-Ming Tam
Integrated Collection &
Dissemination Services



Geoff Lee
Methodology & Data
Management



Jenine Borowik
Technology Services



Janet Murphy
Corporate Services

Regional Directors



Mike McGrath
South Australia



Michael Tindall
Western Australia



Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly
Tasmania



Chris Libreri
New South Wales



Beider Cho
Australian Capital
Territory



Carl Obst
Victoria



Marilyn Henden
Northern Territory



Maelisa McNeil
Queensland

Assistant Statisticians



Michael Davies
National Accounts



Bernard Williams
International Accounts
and Financial Statistics



Judy Henson
Prices



Jason Russo
Economic Analysis
and Reporting



Paul Lowe
Population Census



Gemma Van Halderen
Environment &
Agriculture Statistics



Paul Williams
Industry Statistics



Sue Taylor
Labour and
Demography



Bob McColl
Social Conditions
Statistics



Paul Jelfs
Health Information
and Social Analysis



Ian Crettenden
Education, Crime &
Cultural Statistics



Donna Nicholson
Integrated Collection



Kim Farley-Larmour
Customer Services



Jill Charker
Analytical Services



Vince Lazzaro
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Frank Yu
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Michael Beahan
Data Management
and Classifications



Chris Duffy
Technology Strategy
and Planning



Lane Masterton
Technology
Infrastructure



Brian Studman
Technology
Applications



Gillian Nicoll
Office of the Statistician



Martin Gregory
Business Support



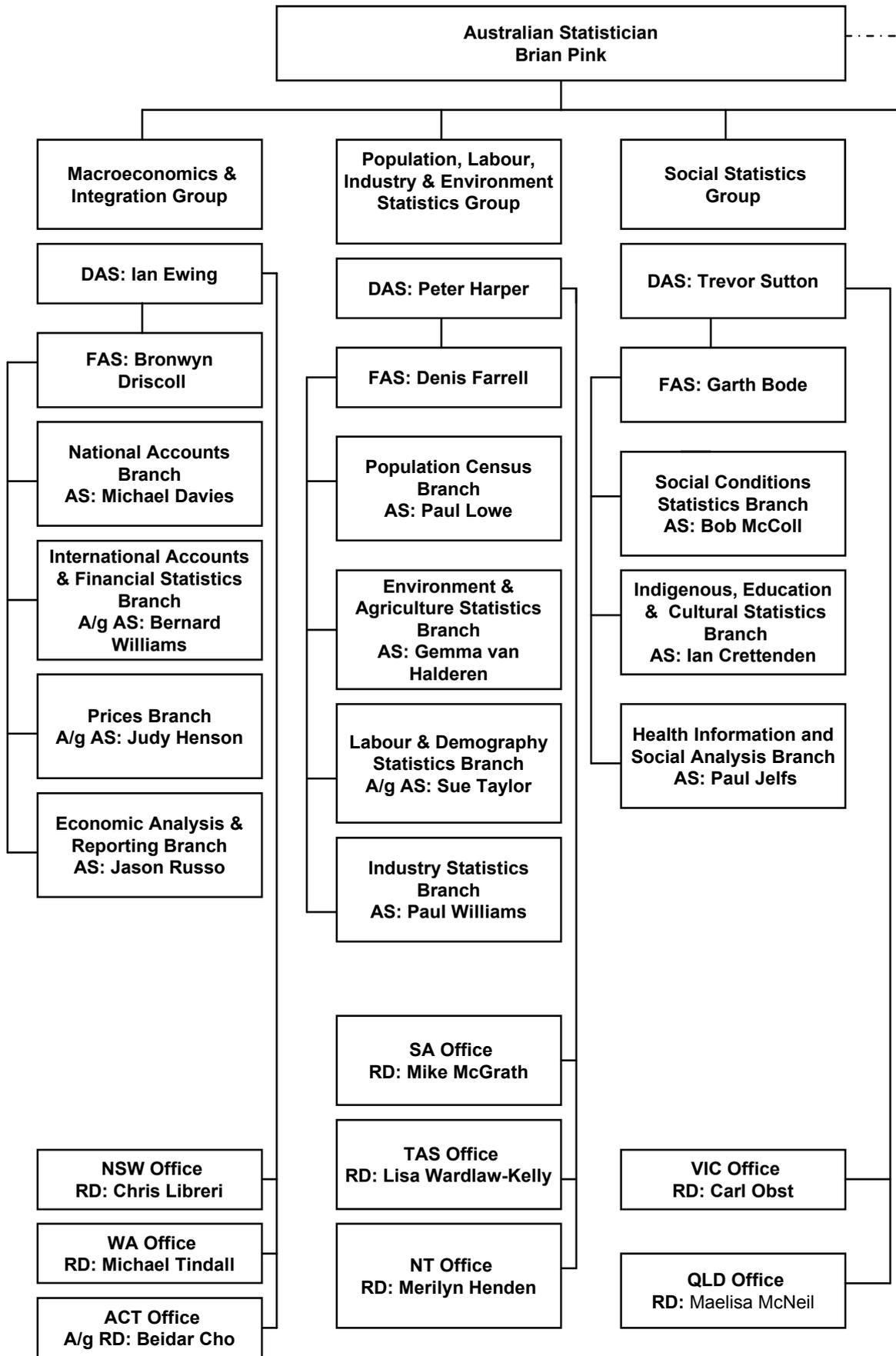
Heather Jones
Human Resources

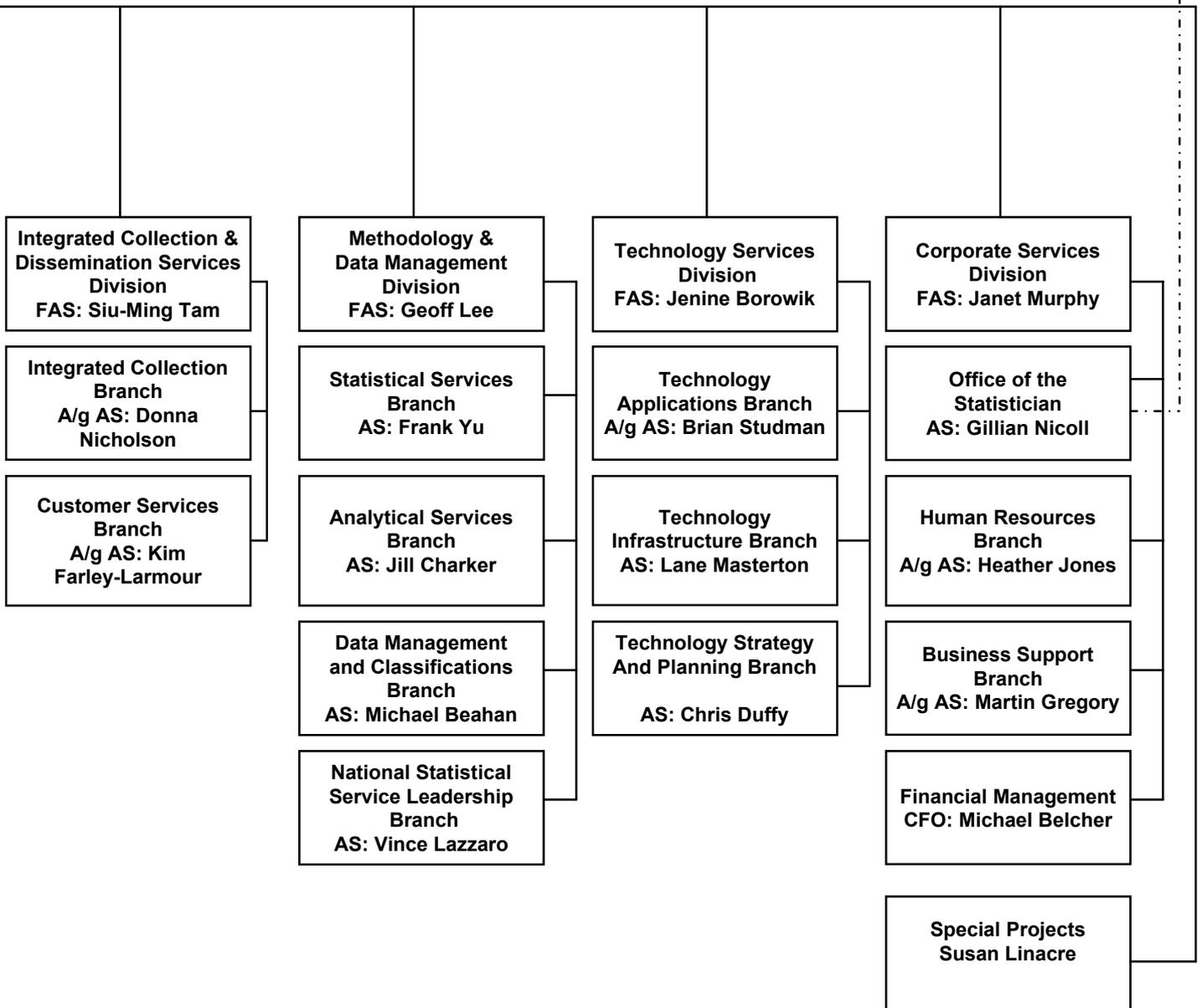


Michael Belcher
Financial Management
Branch



Susan Linacre
Special Projects





ABS Forward Work Program 2009-10 to 2012-13



ABS Strategic Directions

Introduction

The ABS work program is established in response to current and emerging statistical priorities of users, and in the context of the ABS mission and overall strategic directions. The statistical drivers and demands of the government and community are broad ranging and are increasing both in volume and complexity. As Australia's national statistical agency, the ABS has a responsibility to respond to these demands, within the limitations of the resources allocated to it. The ABS' statement of strategic directions therefore presents the broad objectives that the ABS has chosen to pursue, which shape its priorities and work program for the period 2009-10 to 2012-13.

Strategic Directions

- 1 Build and maintain an adequate resource base to support our core work program.
- 2 Actively build relationships and target specific areas to progress the National Statistical Service (NSS).
- 3 Determine our next generation of statistical requirements and information management infrastructure requirements and secure the necessary funding to enable this to occur. This includes an investment in innovation.
- 4 Develop a set of scenarios with regard to the organisation of the work of the ABS, including: work design; organisational design; how best to secure our future workforce; and the implications of supporting an expanding NSS. Agree on a preferred modus operandi to 2020.
- 5 As a key information agency, maintain our strategic knowledge base by investing in future workforce needs that will build on core capability and capacity.
- 6 Continued standardisation and harmonisation of data collection requirements and methods across the Australian government, including through e-data initiatives, with the aim of simplifying businesses' interactions with government and reducing duplication of data collection.
- 7 Influence the development and implementation of statistical standards and frameworks of relevance to our region through the implementation of the 'ABS's leadership role in International Statistics' strategy.

Key priorities contributing to the ABS achieving these directions

Supporting COAG Measurement Issues

Through the 2009 Federal Budget, the Government has provided \$14.2m over four years to the ABS to help implement the performance reporting framework underpinning the measurement of progress against key Council of Australian Government (COAG) initiatives. The ABS will develop data for a range of performance indicators specified in the National Agreements on health care, education, affordable housing, disability, skills and workforce development and Indigenous reform. It is envisaged that the ABS will also play a lead role as advisor to other agencies in respect of the quality assurance of non-ABS data being used for COAG performance reporting. Another important role for ABS official statistics will be for 'bench testing' the fitness for purpose of some COAG indicators developed from other sources. The ABS already provides such advice on sources, methods and meaning to a wide range of users and producers of statistics.

In addition to the budget measures above, the COAG meeting in July 2009 provided the ABS with a further \$34.1m towards improvement of information concerning Indigenous people. The ABS will undertake work to improve the enumeration of the Indigenous population in the 2011 Census of Population and Housing and reverse the trend of under-enumeration, particularly in problematic areas, including rural and remote areas and regional centres. To complement this work, the Census Post Enumeration Survey will be expanded to include very remote areas and discrete Indigenous communities, strengthening Indigenous population estimates. Additional work will also be undertaken linking the 2011 Census data with national mortality data to better identify the Indigenous persons in both collections. Information from this work will then be used to improve the accuracy of life expectancy estimates for Indigenous people. Work will also be undertaken in parallel to improve the linkage techniques applied to Indigenous related data. Another initiative will assist the ABS to work with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to assess the extent of Indigenous identification in key data sets (births, deaths, education) and make recommendations about how these collections might be improved.

Environmental Statistics Programs

Australia continues to face critical challenges in water and energy security, reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. The Government has placed a high priority on managing these challenges for Australia. However, comparatively little is known about the connections between the state, condition and price of these issues and socio-economic outcomes. Without this knowledge, it is not possible to measure change, develop, implement and evaluate policies or programs. The ABS is working closely with the community and governments to further build the fourth information pillar, that is, environment statistics, to complement the more established information bases around the population, society and the economy. One essential aspect of this development work is focused around the integration of environmental statistics with Australia's economic and social statistics.

The ABS and the international statistical community are currently mainstreaming integrated environmental-economic accounting as part of national statistical systems. Environmental-economic accounts are a satellite system of the System of National Accounts, and enable the relationship between the environment and the economy to be analysed and understood. Such an environmental statistics program would deliver regular integrated environmental-economic accounts to provide the insight into who is using Australia's natural resources, the distribution of environmental resources across different parts of the economy, and the economic implications of environmental actions.

Renewal of Core Business System Infrastructure

Even with the positive outcome in the 2009-10 Federal Budget, the operating position of the organisation in future years remains tight. Several whole-of-Government initiatives currently underway, including Operation Sunlight and the implementation of recommendations from the Gershon Review into Government Use of ICT, will have a potentially significant impact on the way the ABS approaches capital investment decisions on ICT infrastructure and systems in the future. Compounding this is the fact that the organisation has many ageing elements of its Core Business System Infrastructure, which need replacement in order to allow the ABS to continue to keep pace with the demands of both data providers and users.

The ABS financial situation is not uncommon among many National Statistical Offices around the world. The Statistician, Brian Pink, is seeking stronger collaboration between National Statistical offices on the development of the next generation of statistical infrastructure. There are plans for a workshop to explore this as a proposition for moving forward.

Demands for data integration

As the demand for linkages between social, economic and environmental datasets increases the need for strong and consistent governance, methods, policies and protocols around data integration becomes greater.

The ABS is engaging in discussions with a variety of user communities, providing them with expert advice on data linking and associated confidentiality issues. The potential gains of bringing together, in a controlled and secure manner, data from portfolios such as health, education, migration and family support are immense. However, the potential risks of poorly managed data linkage activities on the Census of Population and Housing and other ABS collection activities, as well as to the custodians of administrative data are significant. It is important to engage the broader community in discussions around data linkage activities as, without their acceptance, the advantages of the linked datasets will be lost.

A specific data integration initiative that the ABS is actively engaged in is the Public Health Research Network which is funded by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy funding. It was also supported in each State and Territory by a combination of State Governments (usually Departments of Health), University and other organisations. The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy provided \$20 million initially to assist in the establishment of data linkage units in all States and Territories, to build on existing linkage facilities in WA and NSW and to establish a national coordinating centre.

Whilst the ABS is not a funder or a member of these organisations, it has been engaging with the development of these units, providing some guidance on data issues, linkage principles, privacy practices and ensuring a long term relationship with these organisations for future alignment with ABS activities in this field.

National Statistical Service



Program Manager

Vince Lazzaro
Assistant Statistician
National Statistical
Service Leadership
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	4.0
Full costs	8.1

% of total costs 2.5%

Staff usage
16 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.3
2010-11	3.5
2011-12	3.5
2012-13	3.5

References

National Statistical
Service

www.nss.gov.au

Select Statistical
Clearing House on the
horizontal navigation
bar

Objectives

The National Statistical Service Leadership program provides a focal point within the ABS for strategies aimed at strengthening and extending the National Statistical Service (NSS). While remaining consistent with the ABS' legislated responsibilities to be Australia's central statistical authority, the program will identify opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations, to expand and improve the quality and awareness of their statistical services.

Within the ABS, the program serves as a catalyst, coordinator and evaluator of specified NSS activities, particularly those which cut across ABS program areas or involve cross jurisdictional developments.

Externally, the program provides leadership and support to policy and research professionals by delivering best practice statistical guides and tools to assist in their statistical activities. It also supports inter-agency committees associated with progressing the NSS.

The program also maintains and develops the Australian Government Statistical Clearing House, which seeks to reduce the load on businesses and to ensure the quality of those business surveys is sufficient to provide the information needed.

The principal clients of the National Statistical Service Leadership program are producers and users of statistical information both within the ABS and in other Australian, state, territory and local government organisations. The targeted outcomes of this program are: more and better quality data for policy and research; improved, and more widely available statistical infrastructure and services; and increased capability of producers and users of statistics.

Outputs

The program has the following outputs:

- policy and strategies for the ongoing development of the NSS
- best practice materials and tools for collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of survey and administrative by-product data
- NSS communication, which includes newsletters, seminars, presentations to training courses, the Community Indicators Summit in Brisbane and NatStats10 and participation in relevant conferences, particularly those that relate to information sharing across governments.
- secretariat services to the NSS Board and the Australian Government Statistical Forum, and participation in interdepartmental committees
- administration and delivery of the Australian Government Statistical Clearing House service, which provides a detailed assessment, suggestions for improvement, and formal approval of business surveys run by Australian government agencies.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- Undertake a scoping study on the development of a Statistical Clearing House to include household surveys conducted by Australian Government agencies – due December 2009.
- Investigate the key issues around the development of a statistical and information policy for Australia – due June 2010
- Build on the success of the NatStats08 Conference through the promotion of the Statistical Declaration and other conference outcomes – ongoing
- Promote the development of policy and strategies for the NSS across government agencies and jurisdictions – ongoing
- Support the development of statistical skills and capabilities for producers and users of official statistics – ongoing
- Work collaboratively with other agencies to grow the National Statistical Service and improve the accessibility and interpretability of relevant statistical content – ongoing
- Foster the statistical leadership capabilities of all ABS staff – ongoing
- Support a multi-layered engagement strategy for key clients – ongoing

Statistical Programs



Program Manager

Michael Davies
Assistant Statistician
National Accounts
Branch

Resources

National Accounts

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	9.9
Full costs	19.4

% of total costs 6.0%

Staff usage
60 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	10.2
2010-11	10.1
2011-12	7.8
2012-13	7.9

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Economy, then National
Accounts

under National Statistics
select National Accounts

Other references

*Australian National
Accounts: Concepts,
Sources and Methods* (cat.
no. 5216.0)

Objectives

The National Accounts program provides quarterly and annual data about the level of economic activity and the structure of the Australian and state economies within a coherent system of concepts and classifications.

The main clients of the program are various Australian government agencies (in particular the Treasury), the Reserve Bank of Australia, state government agencies (in particular state treasuries), international organisations such as the International Monetary Fund and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, economic analysts in the private sector, the media and academics.

National accounts information is used to: formulate and assess government macro-economic policies, both fiscal and monetary; assist in allocating Australian government funds to state governments; formulate industry development policies; undertake financial and business planning; and facilitate international economic comparisons.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are the quarterly publications *Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product* (ABS cat. no.5206.0) and *Australian National Accounts: Financial Accounts* (ABS cat. no.5232.0); and the annual publication *Australian System of National Accounts* (ABS cat. no.5204.0). Together these publications provide comprehensive measures of Australia's macro economic performance and economic structure.

The key series relate to current price and volume measures of Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) broken down into its components. In the quarterly publication, most data are published in seasonally adjusted and trend terms. The publications also show estimates for the national income and capital accounts, and sector accounts such as households and general government. Data on financial transactions, flow of funds and financial balance sheet positions are provided quarterly, and complete balance sheets for sectors and the nation are compiled annually.

Annual estimates of economic growth for each state and territory are published separately in *Australian National Accounts: State Accounts* (ABS cat. no.5220.0). The program also produces publications containing Input-Output tables and an annual tourism satellite account that highlights the contribution of tourism to the Australian economy.

The release of annual Input-Output (ABS cat. no.5209.0) tables began in June 2008. The ABS had previously produced the tables on an irregular basis. The tables provide a detailed articulation of the structure of economic production by detailing the flows of products into and between industries and their use for consumption, investment or export.

In September 2009, a Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account (ABS cat. no.5256.0) will be released. A NPI Satellite Account provides a means by which the economic aspects of NPIs can be drawn out and analysed separately within the structure of the national accounts. One of the major features is that the satellite account is set within the context of the whole economy, so that NPIs' contribution to major national accounting aggregates can be determined.

The program provides seminars, training courses and other information to assist economic analysts in understanding and using national accounts statistics.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement the update of the international standard for the compilation of national accounts – the System of National Accounts – due December 2009
- implement the revised industry classification Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 – due December 2009
- participate in a review of financial statistics, in consultation with key users and providers, including a review of sources and uses of data and implement recommendations – due December 2010
- update Concepts, Sources and Methods publication – December 2010
- review and improve national accounts compilation processes and methods, in particular addressing areas highlighted by the performance of the accounts in tracking the global financial crisis and filling gaps to produce a full set of accounts – December 2011
- contribute to research of topics identified as needing further work during the update of the System of National Accounts, with an emphasis on the concept of income – ongoing

Program Manager

Bernard Williams
Assistant Statistician A/g
International Accounts
and Financial Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	4.6
Full costs	9.8

% of total costs 3.1%

Staff usage
20 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	4.7
2010-11	4.5
2011-12	4.5
2012-13	5.1

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Economy, then Balance
of Payments or Foreign
Investment and
Foreign Debt

Other references

*Balance of Payments, and
International Investment
Position, Australia:
Concepts, Sources and
Methods* (cat. no. 5331.0)
*A Guide to Australian
Balance of Payments and
International Investment
Position Statistics* (cat. no.
5362.0.55.001)

Objectives

The International Accounts program provides statistics on Australia's Balance of Payments and International Investment position. The statistics are compiled from a range of surveys and administrative data sources.

The main users of the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position data are economic and industry analysts and policy advisers in Australian government agencies (in particular, the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Productivity Commission and the Departments of: Foreign Affairs and Trade; Prime Minister and Cabinet; and Resources, Energy and Tourism), economic analysts in the private sector, academics, the media, international organisations, and currency market dealers.

The data are used to analyse Australia's external performance, evaluate macro-economic policy, analyse trends in income and capital flows, understand patterns of investment into and out of the economy and determine foreign investment policy.

The balance of payments and international investment position are also inputs to the Australian national accounts, providing the external transactions accounts and the external assets and liabilities components of the national balance sheet.

Outputs

The Balance of Payments is a statistical statement that summarises the economic transactions of Australia with the rest of the world. The statistics summarise transactions in the current and capital account involving: goods; services; income; and intellectual property. Transfers (offsets to one-sided transactions in the current, capital or financial accounts) are also recorded in the current or capital accounts. In the financial account, transactions in financial claims on, and liabilities to, the rest of the world are reported.

The international investment position is a statement of the value and composition of Australian financial claims on, and liabilities to, the rest of the world. Its reconciliation format integrates the opening and closing investment positions with the transactions flows in the financial account of the balance of payments and with other changes in financial position (price, exchange rate and other volume changes). The currency and maturity of external debt are also presented.

The quarterly publication *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5302.0) contains a comprehensive set of international accounts statistics including chain volume measures for trade in goods and services and seasonally adjusted data for the current account. The annual publication *International Investment Position, Australia: Supplementary Statistics* (ABS cat. no.5352.0) presents statistics by country on transactions, investment levels and income for both Australian investment abroad (assets) and foreign assets in Australia (liabilities).

Summary transactions of goods and services on a Balance of Payments conceptual basis, and more detailed presentations of exports and imports on a merchandise trade basis, are provided monthly in the publication *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5368.0).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement new international standards for international and national accounts – due December 2009
- investigate and, if appropriate, implement seasonal adjustment techniques improving alignment between monthly and quarterly balance of payments series – due September 2010
- review and update Balance of Payments and International Investment Position concepts, sources and methods documentation to reflect the revised international standards – due December 2010
- investigate and identify possible data sources for capturing manufacturing services on physical inputs owned by others in Australia's balance of payments – due March 2011
- review commodity classifications used in the balance of payments to ensure that they remain relevant and that they are linked appropriately to international and other ABS classifications – due December 2012
- review international accounts data quality, identify components that pose a risk, and improve the conceptual and methodological information available to users – ongoing.

Program Manager

Bernard Williams
Assistant Statistician A/g
International Accounts
and Financial Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	1.8
Full costs	3.6

% of total costs 1.0%

Staff usage
18 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	1.7
2010-11	1.8
2011-12	1.9
2012-13	1.7

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Economy, then Foreign
Trade

Other references

*International Merchandise
Trade, Australia: Concepts,
Sources and Methods* (cat.
no. 5489.0)

*Balance of Payments and
International Investment
Position, Australia:
Concepts, Sources and
Methods* (cat. no. 5331.0)

Objectives

The International Trade program provides statistics on Australia's exports and imports of goods and services. Statistics on merchandise (goods) exports and imports are derived from records lodged by exporters and importers with the Australian Customs Service. Statistics on trade in services are derived from the Survey of International Trade in Services, conducted by the ABS, and a range of administrative and other sources.

International trade statistics (with some timing and coverage adjustments made to the merchandise trade figures to put them on a balance of payments basis) are important inputs to Australia's balance of payments and national accounts. Accordingly the ABS International Accounts and National Accounts programs are key clients of the International Trade program.

International trade statistics are used to monitor the performance of Australia's exports and imports, for formulating and reviewing trade policy, and in trade negotiations. They are also used to evaluate the industry and domestic market implications of Australia's trade activities and to draw international comparisons.

Key users of the statistics include analysts and policy formulators in Australian government agencies (in particular the Departments of: Foreign Affairs and Trade; and Resources, Energy and Tourism; and the Treasury, Austrade, and the Productivity Commission), state government agencies, analysts in industry associations, and importers and exporters.

Outputs

The publication *International Merchandise Imports, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5439.0) provides summary information on Australia's merchandise imports for the latest reference month, on a recorded trade basis. Detailed merchandise import statistics are available via the ABS web site.

Monthly information on exports and imports of goods and services, on the preferred balance of payments basis, is released in *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5368.0). Seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are included, with analysis and comment on the monthly results. The publication includes a selection of tables showing merchandise exports and imports data on a recorded trade basis. Detailed merchandise export statistics are available via the ABS web site.

More detailed international trade in services data are available quarterly and data by partner country and state are released annually, as data cubes, on a calendar year basis (ABS cat. no.5368.0.55.004) and financial year basis (ABS cat. no.5368.0.55.003), via the ABS web site.

Very detailed merchandise trade data can be obtained from ABS Client Services. Merchandise trade statistics are classified by commodity, country of trading partner, state, industry of origin and broad economic category.

Feature articles explaining and analysing various aspects of international trade data are produced as appropriate and made available on the ABS web site, normally concurrently with the release of a particular monthly issue of *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5368.0).

The program produces the *Australian Harmonized Export Commodity Classification (AHECC)* (ABS cat. no.1233.0). Replacement pages are normally issued six monthly. The classification and replacement pages are released electronically via the ABS web site.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement new international standards for international and national accounts – due October 2009
- implement improved methodology and data sources for the insurance component of international trade in services – due October 2009
- release an updated article on export and import currencies – due June 2010
- investigate the feasibility of releasing additional detail on trade in services by country – due December 2010
- investigate improved methodology and data sources for the government services component of international trade in services – due December 2010
- investigate the feasibility of releasing detailed merchandise trade data via the ABS Website – due December 2010
- contribute to the development of an updated manual on the compilation of international merchandise trade statistics – due 2011
- revise the AHECC and the statistical codes of the Customs Tariff for the 2012 update to the international Harmonized System – due January 2012.

Program Manager

Bernard Williams A/g
Assistant Statistician
International Accounts
and Financial Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.4
Full costs	4.9

% of total costs 1.5%

Staff usage
14 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	1.9
2010-11	1.7
2011-12	1.7
2012-13	1.8

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Economy, then Finance

Objectives

The Financial Statistics program compiles statistics on the financial assets and liabilities, including borrowing and lending of financial institutions, and on the stocks and flows of finance for the various sectors of the economy. The statistics are sourced from several statistical surveys and administrative data sources.

Financial statistics are important inputs to Australia's financial accounts, and accordingly, the ABS National Accounts program is a key client of the Financial Statistics program.

The external clients of the program include the main financial policy agencies (including the Treasury and the Reserve Bank of Australia), and financial institutions. Industry associations, analysts and state and territory treasuries are also extensive users of the lending statistics.

The various outputs are used for analysis of monetary and other policy outcomes, for monitoring the flows in the financial system, and assessment of the financial performance of the various economic sectors or institutions. Housing finance statistics are used as one of the indicators of consumer sentiment and, together with the other lending finance statistics, are used as forward indicators of demand in the economy.

Outputs

The program produces the quarterly publication *Managed Funds, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5655.0), which includes statistics for cash management trusts, superannuation funds, life insurance corporations, public unit trusts, common funds, and friendly societies. Information on securitisation trusts is released in the quarterly publication *Assets and Liabilities of Australian Securitisers*, (ABS cat. no.5232.0.55.001).

The publication *Housing Finance, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5609.0) includes information on finance commitments for owner occupation and investment housing, as well as balances outstanding on housing finance loans. Finance commitments by banks and other financial institutions are covered, including whether the loans are at fixed or variable rates. *Lending Finance, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5671.0) provides statistics on commercial, personal and lease finance commitments.

The program also compiles the source data for the quarterly publication *Australian National Accounts: Financial Accounts* (ABS cat. no.5232.0), which is a component of the Australian national accounts.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement data collection changes consequent to revisions to the System of National Accounts and Balance of Payments manual, in liaison with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, other providers and major statistical users – due progressively to December 2009
- participate in a review of financial statistics, in consultation with key users and providers, including a review of sources and uses of data and implement recommendations. This will include, in consultation with key users, implementing the recommendations of the review of the lending finance publications, in particular, bringing forward release dates, enhancing content and reviewing frequency of lending finance statistics – due in December 2010
- develop concepts, sources and methods documentation for Managed Funds, following finalisation of the financial statistics review – due December 2010
- review financial statistics data quality, identify components that pose a risk, and improve the conceptual and methodological information available to users – ongoing.

Program Manager

Judy Henson
Assistant Statistician A/g
Prices Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	14.5
Full costs	28.2

% of total costs 8.7%

Staff usage
85 Staff years

Direct Costs \$m

2009-10	17.8
2010-11	17.7
2011-12	17.3
2012-13	16.4

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Economy, then Prices

Objectives

The Prices program compiles a number of key main economic indicators - the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the House Price Index (HPI), the Labour Price Index (LPI), which is an annual series comprising a quarterly Wage Price Index (WPI) and an annual non-wage price index, and a range of Producer and International Trade Price Indexes (PPIs and ITPIs). From August 2009 the program will include a new Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI). The program promotes, through provision of information papers, seminars and other means, a greater understanding in the community of concepts, methods and uses of price indexes generally.

The main clients for the program's outputs are the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Treasury, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), Australian government and state government agencies whose payments are indexed, economic analysts, and the general business community.

The main uses of the CPI are as a general measure of price inflation for the household sector; for production of volume estimates of components of the Australian national accounts; as a basis for indexing pensions, superannuation payments and government taxes and charges; as an input into salary and wage negotiations, and for indexation of government bonds and business contracts.

The main uses of the PBLCI will be as a measure of the impact of changes in prices on the out-of-pocket living costs experienced by pensioners and other government benefit recipient households, and as a basis for indexing pensions and other payments to government benefit recipients.

The main uses of the HPI are as a measure of price changes for established houses and for project homes; for analysis of trends in the housing market, and for production of estimates of the value of the housing stock.

The main uses of the LPI/WPI are as a measure of wage inflation; to inform wage setting negotiations; for production of volume estimates of components of the Australian national accounts, and for the indexation of business contracts.

The main uses of the PPIs and ITPIs are for production of volume estimates of components of the Australian national accounts; as a guide to future inflationary trends, and for indexation of business contracts.

Outputs

The main program outputs are the following quarterly publications:

- *Consumer Price Index, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6401.0) and *Average Retail Prices of Selected Items, Eight Capital Cities* (ABS cat. no.6403.0.55.001)
- *House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities* (ABS cat. no.6416.0)
- *Producer Price Indexes, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6427.0) and *International Trade Price Indexes, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6457.0)
- *Labour Price Index, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6345.0)
- *Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6467.0).

A range of special data services is available on request.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- compile initial series for the Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index using relevant information sourced from the Consumer Price Index – August 2009
- expand the use of hedonic price indexes to cover laptop computers (in the CPI and PPI) - October 2009
- improve CPI measurement of services that have complex pricing mechanisms – telecommunications (October 2009) and utilities (pilot study for Canberra April 2010)
- classify the PPIs and the LPI according to the revised industry classification (ANZSIC 2006) for the September quarter 2009 – October and November 2009 respectively
- implement an LPI sample redesign – starting 2009-10
- undertake a review of the PPIs by stage of production (SOP) (including reweighting on ANZSIC06 basis) – September 2011
- introduce the 16th series CPI (including updated household expenditure weights) for the September quarter 2011 – October 2011
- introduce a program of improvements to the PBLCI (including updated household expenditure weights) – from November 2011

Program Manager

Bernard Williams
Assistant Statistician A/g
International Accounts
and Financial Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	3.4
Full costs	6.7
% of total costs	2.0%

Staff usage
26 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.3
2010-11	3.3
2011-12	3.4
2012-13	3.4

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Economy, then
Government Finance
Statistics

Other references

*Australian System of
Government Finance
Statistics: Concepts,
Sources and Methods*
(cat. no. 5514.0)

Objectives

The Public Sector Accounts program provides Government Finance Statistics (GFS) in respect of the Australian government, state and territory governments, their public non-financial corporations and public financial corporations, universities and local governments. The statistics are compiled from administrative data sources, and ABS surveys.

GFS are used to monitor the financial performance of governments and to inform on the economic impact of government activities. They are also used to assist in the distribution of Australian Government grants to state governments.

The main clients of the program include various Australian Government agencies (in particular the Treasury, the Commonwealth Grants Commission, and the Departments of: Finance and Deregulation; Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; and Health and Ageing), state government agencies (in particular state treasuries), financial market analysts and international agencies. GFS are also an important input to Australia's national accounts.

Outputs

The project produces a number of GFS publications each year, compiled in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Government Finance Statistics Manual.

The main publication is the annual *Government Finance Statistics, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5512.0), which provides an operating statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement for each of the Australian Government, state and territory governments and their public non-financial corporations for the most recent financial year. Key GFS accruals measures such as the net operating balance, net lending/borrowing, and net worth are provided. A cash-based surplus/deficit is also produced.

A quarterly publication, *Government Finance Statistics, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5519.0.55.001), provides operating statements for general government and public non-financial corporations sector aggregates.

The other GFS publications are:

- *Government Financial Estimates, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5501.0.55.001), which provides initial budget forecasts compiled by each jurisdiction on a GFS basis
- *Taxation Revenue, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5506.0), which provides revenue from taxation of the Australian Government, the state governments and local government authorities in Australia
- *Government Finance Statistics, Education, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5518.0.55.001), which provides statistics on government expenditure in the field of education.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- contribute to the revision of the International Monetary Fund's GFS Manual and implement relevant changes – timing to be advised by the International Monetary Fund
- assist the Treasury and/or the Department of Finance in each jurisdiction with implementation and interpretative issues associated with the adoption of the GFS – GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) harmonised financial reporting basis represented by the new accounting standard AASB 1049 (Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting by Governments) – ongoing
- work with the treasury and/or department of finance in each jurisdiction on the continual improvement in the quality and uniformity of Australia's GFS – ongoing.

Business Indicators

Program Manager

Bronwyn Driscoll
First Assistant
Statistician
Macroeconomics
Division

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	4.3
Full costs	12.5

% of total costs 3.9%

Staff usage
34 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.5
2010-11	3.4
2011-12	3.5
2012-13	3.6

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Economy, then Business
Indicators
Under Themes select
Industry, then Retail

Objectives

The Business Indicators program is responsible for the provision of a range of sub-annual main economic indicators. The indicators include:

- monthly statistics of turnover by selected retail industries and the takeaway food services industry
- quarterly statistics of company profits, inventories, sales and labour costs
- quarterly statistics of actual and expected new capital expenditure
- quarterly statistics of actual and expected mineral and petroleum exploration
- biannual statistics of expected mineral and petroleum expenditure.

These data are essential inputs to the compilation of quarterly and annual national accounts and Supply-Use tables.

Other key clients of the program include the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, various state and territory departments, banks, industry associations, and other financial analysts and commentators. These clients use the statistics as partial indicators of the national accounts and as important indicators of economic activity in their own right.

The program is also the data custodian for business taxation data provided by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). These data are essential to ABS business surveys. As such the program has an important role in maintaining the relationship with the ATO and ensuring that the data are used strategically.

Outputs

The key statistical outputs of the program are the monthly publication *Retail Trade, Australia* (ABS cat. no.8501.0) and the quarterly publications *Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5625.0), and *Business Indicators, Australia* (ABS cat. no.5676.0). The last provides information on sales, labour costs, company profits and inventories. Each publication contains both national and state level data and estimates in original, seasonally adjusted and trend terms. In addition, the publications cat. nos: 8501.0; 5625.0; and 5676.0; present current price data by industry and, where appropriate, estimates are presented as chain volume measures.

The program also produces detailed datasets that are available in spreadsheet form via the ABS web site.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop estimates of quarterly business indicators that increase the coverage to include non employing businesses – due December 2009
- implement ANZSIC 2006 for the monthly retail trade – due September 2009
- implement ANZSIC 2006 for the quarterly business indicators and new capital expenditure statistical outputs – due December 2009
- investigate the adequacy of Retail trade's coverage of e-commerce and, if required, options for improving the coverage – due July 2010
- reassess the cost to ABS and data providers and the benefit to users of ABS providing an activity view of Retail trade – due November 2010
- review methodological options for measuring month to month movement in the Retail trade series – due December 2010.
- investigate using BAS data to provide estimates of activity of micro-non-employers for the quarterly business indicators and new capital expenditure outputs – due June 2011
- investigate the integration of the quarterly business indicators survey and annual industry collection with National Accounts estimates – due December 2011

Program Manager

Bill Allen
Assistant Statistician A/g
Integration and
Innovation Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	3.1
Full costs	6.4

% of total costs 2.0%

Staff usage
22 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.0
2010-11	3.0
2011-12	3.1
2012-13	3.1

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Industry, then
Innovation, Science
& Technology

Objectives

The Innovation and Technology Statistics program provides data to assist the understanding of the impact of research, experimental development, innovation and new technologies on economic and social outcomes. It provides measures of the penetration of selected new technologies, particularly information and communication technology (ICT) as well as innovation, within Australia. Some of the outputs relating to businesses are now an integral part of the Business Characteristics Survey, an important component of the Business Longitudinal Database, which is a tool for understanding business activity and possible links to business performance and productivity. The program also undertakes extensive user consultation through the Innovation Reference Group (which includes the Research and Development User Reference Group) and the Information and Communication Technology Reference Group.

Clients of the program include:

- Australian government agencies including the Departments of: Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy; Innovation, Industry, Science and Research; and Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, as well as the Productivity Commission and the Australian Communications and Media Authority;
- state/territory government departments; and
- industry associations, research organisations, universities and businesses.

Outputs

The program produces a range of statistical outputs, showing:

- production of, and trade in, ICT goods and services by Australian businesses and the performance of the ICT industry in Australia;
- use of ICT goods and services by Australian businesses and households;
- internet activity conducted through the Australian Internet Service Provider industry;
- innovation activities undertaken within the Australian economy;
- research and experimental development undertaken by businesses, government, universities and private non-profit organisations;
- selected business characteristics data;
- Business Longitudinal Database Confidentialised Unit Record File.

The program also contributes to the work of national and international statistical agencies, through input to the review and development of statistical standards and frameworks in relevant fields of statistics. Research papers and discussion papers are made available via the ABS web site.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- understand and develop strategies for meeting information needs arising from major government policy initiatives including the National Broadband Network and Innovation White Paper (due June 2010);
- undertake a comprehensive review of existing data collection strategies in the increasingly important area of Research and Development, with a view to developing long term strategies which address existing and emerging policy needs (due December 2010);
- review structure, content and design of the Business Longitudinal Database, to ensure the production of an output which adequately supports robust performance and productivity microdata analysis (due May 2010); and
- implement the [Trade] Harmonized System (2012) to the Business Longitudinal Database (2012).

Program Manager

Bill Allen
Assistant Statistician A/g
Integration and
Innovation Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	1.5
Full costs	3.0

% of total costs 0.9%

Staff usage
13 Staff years

Direct Costs \$m

2009-10	2.0
2010-11	2.2
2011-12	2.5
2012-13	2.5

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Economy, then
Business Demography

Objectives

The Business Demographics program is responsible for the provision of a range of information about the structure, characteristics and performance of businesses in the Australian economy and conceptual developments regarding business definitions and classifications. This information is part of a consistent framework for all ABS business statistics. A particular, but not exclusive, focus of the program is on providing information about small businesses.

Key external clients of the program are Australian and state government agencies and industry associations.

Government policy analysts at all levels of government and researchers make extensive use of the business longitudinal survey database, which was established to facilitate analysis of issues relating to the growth and performance of small and medium sized businesses. The data are used mainly to monitor the structure and performance of the business sector; and to assess the need for, and effectiveness of, policies relating to the small and medium business sector. Business and business operator counts produced by the program are also important for users in understanding the likely impact of particular policies or events.

Outputs

The program releases an annual publication *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits* (ABS cat. no.8165.0), which harmonises previously separate releases of business counts and entries and exits. This publication provides data of relevance to users interested in understanding businesses that actively trade in goods or services.

The final issue of *Characteristics of Small Business, Australia* (ABS cat. no.8127.0) was released early in 2007. This publication has been replaced by *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits*, and by a new publication, *Counts of Australian Business Operators* (ABS cat. no.8175.0), which sourced data from the Census of Population and Housing and the Forms of Employment Survey (a supplement to the Monthly Labour Force Survey).

These outputs, together with a range of relevant information, are available on the Business Demographics theme page on the ABS Website.

Developments

The main medium term development in the program is to:

- Review the potential for use of Personal Income Tax data for the purpose of producing regional business data subject to appropriate legislative changes – due December 2010.

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	7.6
Full costs	19.2

% of total costs 5.9%

Staff usage
48 Staff years

Direct Costs \$m

2009-10	9.2
2010-11	7.2
2011-12	8.0
2012-13	12.2

References

ABS web site:
www.abs.gov.au

Theme pages related to Industry Statistics
Select themes, then under Industry section, select:
Manufacturing Statistics
Mining
Service Industries Statistics

Objectives

The Industry Statistics program provides information about the structure, financial operations, performance and production of Australian industries. The information is used to provide industry benchmark statistics that monitor the economy in regard to the business cycle, and to support the compilation of the Australian National Accounts.

The program consists of two parts: an annual collection of economy wide statistics covering all industries; and, a rolling program of collections, modelling and analytical work covering specific industries and/or activities. The rolling program is undertaken in response to specifically identified user needs.

The main clients of the program include a range of Australian and state government agencies, industry organisations, and financial and academic institutions. Major users of industry data include: Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism; Department of Innovation Industry and Science; Productivity Commission; Geoscience Australia; Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics; state and territory departments responsible for industry policy; and industry organisations and associations.

The program is a major contributor of data to other ABS programs, in particular the National Accounts program. It also contributes to international industry statistics issued by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Outputs

The main outputs of the program include the annual publication *Australian Industry* (ABS cat. no.8155.0) and related data cubes. These outputs provide national estimates of income, expenses, wages and salaries, operating profit before tax, industry value added, operating businesses, employment, and selected business performance measures (averages, ratios, and profitability percentages) at the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) industry division and subdivision levels. Estimates for several of these variables are also presented by broad categories of business size and for non-employed businesses. State/territory estimates for key variables, as well as four-digit ANZSIC industry estimates at the Australian level, are also included with an experimental status.

Other regular quarterly releases are: *Mineral and Petroleum Exploration, Australia* (ABS cat. no.8412.0), *Mining Indicators, Australia* (ABS cat. no.8417.0) and *Manufacturing Indicators, Australia* (ABS cat. no.8229.0)

During 2009-10, statistics on the following topics will be released: community services; and, energy, water and environmental management.

Information tailored to specific requirements of users is also available by request on a consultancy basis. These requests typically include finer dissections of industry and/or data items, or information presented by size classifications based on sales or other indicators.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- release *Australian Industry* outputs for each relevant reference year – 2008-09 due June 2010; 2009-10 due June 2011; 2010-2011 due June 2012
- redevelop web based theme pages related to industry statistics June 2010
- extend the depth and quality of industry statistics through the use of business taxation and other administrative data, and synthetic estimation and/or modelling techniques as appropriate – ongoing.

Program Managers

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Environment and
Agriculture Branch

Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly
Regional Director
Tasmanian Office

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	4.0
Full costs	10.1

% of total costs 3.1%

Staff usage
29 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.4
2010-11	4.3
2011-12	5.8
2012-13	3.4

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes
select Industry, then
Agriculture

for information
on commodity
production and
economic performance.
Select Environment
for information on
environmental practices.

Objectives

The Agriculture program aims to satisfy the statistical needs of agricultural policy makers and other key users of agricultural statistics by providing reliable and relevant information on commodity production, economic performance, and environmental practices.

The main clients of the program include a range of Australian and state government agencies, industry organisations, financial institutions, academic institutions, and private sector organisations providing services to the agricultural sector.

Australian government departments and their agencies such as the Departments of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics; the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, and the state Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources use agricultural data for formulating and monitoring policies on the various activities undertaken within the agricultural industry. Data are also used for managing the nation's natural resources and providing support services to agricultural and rural communities.

Industry organisations such as the National Farmers' Federation, Meat and Livestock Australia and Horticulture Australia use agricultural data to assess the relative performance of the various industries and in the formulation of industry development policies. The data are also important for the development of marketing and export strategies.

Data from this program's collections are used within the ABS in the compilation of the Australian national accounts and environmental-economic accounts such as the *Water Account, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4610.0)

Outputs

Estimates of the quantity of agricultural commodities produced each year, as well as some data on aspects related to production, are available from the annual commodity collection and published in *Agricultural Commodities, Australia* (ABS cat. no.7121.0). Preliminary estimates for the main commodities are released in *Principal Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary* (ABS cat.no. 7111.0). Data showing the structure of agricultural industries in terms of the number of farms within each industry, the distribution of those farms based on both economic and physical size, and land use by agricultural businesses are also provided.

Data related to the value of agricultural commodities are published annually in *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia* (ABS cat. no.7503.0) with preliminary value figures available in *Value of Principal Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, Preliminary* (ABS cat. no.7501.0). *Data related to the value of irrigated agricultural commodities are published in a new series Experimental estimates of the Gross Value of Irrigated Agricultural Production* (ABS cat. no.4610.0.55.008).

National, State and Natural Resource Management region estimates for agricultural commodity production and value, water use and land use are available annually with smaller region information available every five years.

Details of the number of livestock slaughtered for human consumption and meat produced are available on a monthly basis in *Livestock and Meat, Australia, Electronic Delivery* (ABS cat. no.7218.0.55.001). Other data relating to poultry slaughtered, the exports of meat, live sheep and cattle, and the production of milk and wool received by brokers and dealers, are published quarterly in *Livestock Products, Australia* (ABS cat. no.7215.0).

Information about the Australian wheat industry is released monthly in *Wheat Use and Stocks, Australia* (ABS cat. no.7307.0). This includes stocks of wheat grain, domestic use and exports, and commitments. Data are available at national and state level.

Details of agricultural water use and management are available annually in *Water Use on Australian Farms* (ABS cat. no.4618.0). Details of agricultural land management practices are available every second year in *Land Management and Farming in Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4627.0)

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- explore methods of using business taxation data to provide financial information about components of the agricultural sector – due June 2010
- implement the findings of a strategic review of the content of the agricultural commodity survey program – due June 2010
- conduct the 2010-11 Agricultural census, including the release of small area estimates – due June 2012
- continue work on the 2007-2010 intercensal program of agriculture surveys using an Australian Business Register-based frame and the ANZSIC 2006 industry classification – ongoing.

Program Managers

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.4
Full costs	6.4
% of total costs	2.0%

Staff usage
26 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.1
2010-11	2.6
2011-12	1.9
2012-13	2.0

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Industry, then Building
and Construction

Objectives

The Construction program provides regular data on levels of activity in residential building, non-residential building and engineering construction.

The main clients of the program are various Australian government agencies (in particular the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, and the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism), state government planning agencies, electoral authorities, industry associations, economic researchers, public and private forecasters of building activity, producers of building materials, land developers, major construction businesses and social/urban researchers.

Building and construction statistics are widely used for monitoring and forecasting the effects of economic policy and analysis of the economic cycle, and are an important input to the Australian national accounts. They are also used in the analysis of issues affecting the building and construction industries as well as the finance and investment sector. Building statistics are also used in estimating population change, which is an essential input to regional planning processes and most economic and social models in use in Australia.

Outputs

The program produces a wide range of outputs. Building approvals statistics, which provide a leading indicator of future building activity, are released in the monthly publication *Building Approvals, Australia* (ABS cat. no.8731.0). This publication includes statistics on the number of new dwellings approved and the value of both residential and non-residential buildings approved by relevant authorities. More detailed data, including extensive state and sub-state time series, are also released each month via a suite of electronic products.

Other regular outputs on the level of building and engineering construction activity being undertaken are released quarterly. Preliminary estimates for both sectors are released in *Construction Work Done, Australia, Preliminary* (ABS cat. no.8755.0). More detailed statistics, including the number of new dwellings commenced, the value of building and engineering work done, and the value of projects commenced and completed are released in *Building Activity, Australia* (ABS cat. no.8752.0) and *Engineering Construction Activity, Australia* (ABS cat. no.8762.0).

The program also undertakes and publishes analytical work, on an ad hoc basis, which explores the relationship between building and construction activities, societal changes and general economic conditions and developments.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review methodologies, practices and processes for Building and Construction collections including, potentially, certain enhancements or adjustments in outputs – due March 2010.
- review the content from the Building & Construction Program, with particular reference to output levels as proposed by the changes to ASGC – due June 2010.
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the construction collections, including adoption of the use of autocoding, the ABS' economic data management and storage facility, and the Information Data Warehouse – due December 2010.

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	0.7
Full costs	2.4

% of total costs 0.7%

Staff usage
8 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	1.5
2010-11	1.2
2011-12	1.6
2012-13	1.2

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Industry, then Transport

Objectives

The Transport program is responsible for producing statistics on transport and transport related activities and undertakes a coordination and liaison role between producers and users of transport data.

The main clients of the program are various Australian government agencies – in particular: the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics; the Commonwealth Grants Commission; and the Treasury – state and territory government agencies; the National Road Transport Commission; and industry and academic organisations.

Statistics from the transport collections are used to assist in policy and planning deliberations by governments and transport organisations, particularly in the areas of long term planning, the regulation of road transport operators and for accident exposure and fuel use analysis. Information about the vehicle fleet provides a measure of the stock of vehicles registered for road use at a point in time and supports the study of links between demographic change and vehicle ownership and use. Statistics on new motor vehicle sales provide an economic indicator of consumer confidence.

Outputs

The regular publications of the program are the monthly major economic indicator, *Sales of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, Electronic Delivery* (ABS cat. no.9314.0.55.001), the *Survey of Motor Vehicle Use, Australia* (ABS cat. no.9208.0) (biannual), *Experimental Estimates of Motor Vehicle Use* (ABS cat. no.9222.0) (biannual) and *Motor Vehicle Census, Australia* (ABS cat. no.9309.0) (annual). In addition irregular publications including *Freight Movements, Australia, Summary, Electronic Delivery* (ABS cat. no.9220.0.80.001) and *Rail Freight Movements, Australia, Summary, Electronic Delivery* (ABS cat. no.9220.0.55.001) are produced.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- liaise with Motor Vehicle Registries to examine the feasibility, and develop a business case, for inclusion of Australian Business Number on motor vehicle registrations – August 2009
- finalise work with the Strategic Research and Technology Working Group – due November 2009
- develop a transport statistics work program with a view to maximising use of existing data holdings by improving metadata and data visibility – December 2009
- develop options for a transport satellite account – June 2010

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	1.0
Full costs	3.2

% of total costs 1.0%

Staff usage
7 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	1.0
2010-11	0.6
2011-12	0.5
2012-13	0.7

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Industry, then Tourism

Other references

*Framework for Australian
Tourism Statistics –
Electronic Delivery* (cat.
no. 9502.0.55.001)

Objectives

The Tourism program is responsible for producing regular, timely and coherent data on tourism activities. It also undertakes a coordination and liaison role between tourism statistics users and other areas of the ABS that produce tourism related statistics. Data include the Australian Tourism Satellite Account, overseas arrivals and departures, tourism related exports and imports indicators, Survey of Tourist Accommodation and data collected under the Industry Statistics program. The program is also responsible for the development and maintenance of tourism frameworks, standards and concepts.

The main clients of the program are: state and territory tourism commissions; the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism; Tourism Australia and Tourism Research Australia; the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism; key tourism industry associations; academic and research groups; and marketing and consultancy bodies.

Tourism data are used to assist in economic analysis and policy formation relating to tourism, to measure the size and structure of tourism related industries, to allocate state government funding to regional areas, and for local government planning and investment. The Survey of Tourist Accommodation data are an input into the policy and planning activities of government and industry, particularly in relation to tourism activity in regional areas.

Outputs

The main output of the program is the quarterly publication *Tourist Accommodation, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 8635.0). This publication provides detailed demand and supply data relating to hotels, motels and guest houses with 15 or more rooms, and serviced apartments with 15 or more units (derived from the Survey of Tourist Accommodation). As a result of the Tourism White Paper, and with funding from the Department of Resources Energy and Tourism, the ABS has expanded the survey to include smaller establishments and other accommodation types.

The program works with the National Accounts program to produce the *Australian National Accounts: Tourism Satellite Account* (ABS cat. no. 5249.0). The production of the account is funded by Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism as part of the Tourism White Paper.

Other outputs of the program relate to research and development work in such areas as tourism statistics frameworks and classifications. The program undertakes a strong coordination role, working in partnership with key clients to ensure the availability of a suite of tourism statistics that meet the broad needs of users.

The program also actively assists in user education relating to *Australian National Accounts: Tourism Satellite Account* (ABS cat. no. 5249.0), *Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3401.0), *Short-term Visitor Arrival Estimates, Australia, Electronic Delivery* (ABS cat. no. 3401.0.55.001), tourism related services exports and imports indicators in *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 5368.0) and *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 5302.0), and the tourism related outputs issued by the Service Industries program.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- finalise the statistical program to underpin future benchmarking of the Tourism Satellite Account – due September 2009
- re-benchmark the Tourism Satellite Account and implement the new international standards – due March 2010
- contribute to the UN World Tourism Organisation and other international bodies as they examine statistical definitions and classifications – ongoing.

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Environment Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	3.1
Full costs	7.0

% of total costs 2.1%

Staff usage
29 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.9
2010-11	3.4
2011-12	3.0
2012-13	3.5

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes
select Environment
and Energy, then
Environment

Objectives

The ABS Environment and Energy program meets the growing need for environment and energy information by integrating environmental, economic and social data.

The program actively engages with partners to improve Australia's system of environment and energy statistics. Clients of the program include:

- Commonwealth Departments of: the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Resources, Energy and Tourism; Climate Change; and the Treasury
- government agencies and programs such as the Bureau of Rural Sciences; Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Research Economics; National Water Commission; Murray Darling Basin Authority and Bureau of Meteorology
- state/territory government departments with environment or energy responsibilities
- academic/research organisations, environmental groups, businesses and individuals.

Data usage is varied and includes meeting international reporting obligations as well as the formulation of policies, economic analysis, research and forecasting – all of which assist in managing the nation's environment.

Outputs

Program outputs are many and varied, ranging from generalist compendia and thematic publications to specialised topic specific publications and research papers, including:

- environmental accounts to understand the linkages between the availability, use and management of natural resources, energy and economic activity. The ABS environmental accounts program currently features a four yearly *Water Account Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4610.0) but other environmental accounts such as energy, minerals, forests and fish accounts are periodically compiled.
- biennial National Resource Management information on issues and problems at the regional level in *Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4620.0)
- agricultural water use and management information in *Water Use on Australian Farms* (ABS cat. no. 4618.0) and *Experimental Estimates of the Gross Value of Irrigated Agricultural Production* (ABS cat. no. 4610.0.55.008)
- household behaviour and practice statistics relating to water, energy, transport and waste issues in the *Environmental Issues: series 4602.0.55.001/002/003* and environmental views and behaviour in *Environmental Views and Behaviour* (ABS cat. no. 4626.0.55.001).
- a regular compendium of environmental issues and trends, *Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends* (ABS cat. no. 4613.0)
- research-based outputs from experimental projects such as *Developing An Alternative View of Electricity and Gas Supply Activity in Australia* (ABS cat. no. 4647.0.55.001).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- undertake a 2008-09 Energy Use, Water Use and Environmental Management survey – for publication May 2010
- undertake a baseline survey of the Great Barrier Reef – due for release December 2009
- develop and release *Water Account, Australia, 2008-09* (ABS cat. no. 4610) – for publication in December 2010
- engage in the international harmonisation of energy standards – due Feb 2011
- investigate the use of data collected via the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting System for statistical purposes – June 2011
- undertake a 2009-10 Waste Management Survey – for publication June 2011
- engage in the development and agreement of a new international statistical standard known as the System of Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounts – Feb 2012
- improve Australia's system of environment statistics. In particular, compile and disseminate regular national environmental accounts – ongoing
- develop and implement a strategy to improve Australia's energy statistics – ongoing
- engage in climate change, energy efficiency, and water initiatives, particularly the development of National Water Information Standards and a National Water Account by the Bureau of Meteorology – ongoing.

Program Manager

Sue Taylor
Assistant Statistician A/g
Labour and Demography
Statistics Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.9
Full costs	6.6
% of total costs	2.0%

Staff usage
34 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.0
2010-11	2.9
2011-12	2.8
2012-13	2.9

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then
demography

Objectives

The key objective of the Demography program is to produce estimates of the recent and projected population, and analysis of the components of population growth and related demographic trends. These data are provided at the national, state/territory and regional level. These statistics are produced to:

- meet a range of legislative requirements that make reference to population estimates
- to assist in the formulation and monitoring of government policies, and in the planning and administration of government programs
- to enable planning and market analyses by businesses and community organisations
- to enable research and analyses by governments, businesses, academic institutions and others into the causes and consequences of population change.

Reflecting the use of population estimates for electoral and funding purposes, the main clients of the program are: Australian and state electoral commissions; Australian, state and territory treasuries; and Commonwealth, state and Northern Territory grants commissions. Within the ABS, demographic estimates and projections are the basis for population survey benchmarks. Other clients include agencies involved in issues associated with migration and multicultural affairs, local area planning, health, the Indigenous population, family and community services, the environment and international tourism.

Outputs

The key output is quarterly state and territory population estimates published in *Australian Demographic Statistics* (ABS cat. no. 3101.0).

The program produces estimates of the total population by age, sex, country of birth, marital status and geographical distribution; estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population; and estimates of families and households. Regular statistics are also produced on births, fertility rates, deaths, life expectancy, mortality rates, overseas arrivals and departures, and internal migration. Projections of population, families and households according to specified demographic assumptions are published on a regular basis and produced for individual clients. Population benchmarks are provided for use in ABS and other population surveys. In addition to producing demographic statistics, courses on understanding demographic data are conducted and an electronic newsletter is issued.

Other major publications include: *Births, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3301.0); *Deaths, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3302.0); *Migration, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3412.0); *Regional Population Growth, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3218.0); *Population Projections, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3222.0); *Household and Family Projections, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 3236.0); and *Experimental Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians* (ABS cat. no. 3238.0). In addition, an extensive range of historical data is available on the ABS web site in *Australian Historical Population Statistics* (ABS cat. no. 3105.0.65.001).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- prepare and release estimates and projections of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population based on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing – due September 2009
- review and implement the method for compiling preliminary net overseas migration estimates – by January 2010
- develop 2011 Post Enumeration Survey (PES) strategy and undertake dress rehearsal – due July 2010
- prepare and release projections of living arrangements, families and households based on the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing – by August 2010
- prepare experimental small area internal migration estimates using administrative data sources – by June 2011
- undertake 2011 PES following the 2011 Census – September 2011
- investigate data sources and methods for estimating sub-state net overseas migration statistics – by December 2011
- publish results from 2011 PES – due December 2011
- implementation of ASGS for small area estimates – by June 2012

Program Manager

Sue Taylor
Assistant Statistician A/g
Labour and Demography
Statistics Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	8.0
Full costs	44.6

% of total costs 13.7%

Staff usage
49 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	7.9
2010-11	7.9
2011-12	6.6
2012-13	6.7

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes Section
People, then Labour

Objectives

The key objectives for the Labour Statistics program are to address labour statistics priorities and be responsive to user needs by producing high quality labour statistics in a timely, efficient and effective manner. The Labour Statistics program provides information about the structure and performance of the labour market. The program produces statistics on labour supply (such as labour force participation, unemployment, employment conditions and broader measures of labour underutilisation); labour demand (such as employee earnings, job vacancies and labour costs); and workplace relations.

Labour statistics are used extensively in the analysis, evaluation, and monitoring of: the economy; the labour market; a wide range of government policies and programs (such as those relating to employment, income support, industrial relations); and population groups of particular concern (such as women, younger persons, older persons, Indigenous people and children living in jobless households). Statistics on labour costs are also used in compiling the Australian national accounts.

The main clients of the program are Commonwealth government agencies (including the Treasury, the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Departments of: Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; and Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and the Commonwealth Grants Commission), state and territory government agencies, industry associations, trade unions and academic researchers.

Outputs

Statistics on labour force participation, employment and unemployment are published monthly in *Labour Force, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 6202.0). More detailed labour force information covering age, country of birth, family status, industry, occupation, hours of work and duration of unemployment is released on the ABS web site either monthly or quarterly. Broad measures of labour underutilisation are updated quarterly. Statistics on particular aspects of the Australian labour market, including labour force experience, working arrangements, forms of employment, labour mobility, underemployment, job search experience, independent contracting, labour hire, working time arrangements, retirement and retirement intentions, barriers and incentives to labour force participation, and marginal attachment to the labour force, are published periodically.

The program produces regular statistics on earnings, employee benefits and labour costs. Statistics on average weekly earnings of employees are published quarterly in *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 6302.0). Distributional data on employee earnings and hours, data on occupational earnings, and data on award and agreement coverage are available every two years in *Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 6306.0). Data on details of major labour costs are available about six-yearly. Information on the number of employees and total employee earnings for the public sector (by state and territory, level of government and industry group) are available annually.

Statistics on job vacancies are published quarterly in *Job Vacancies, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 6354.0). Data on industrial disputes, including working days lost, cause of dispute and reason work resumed, are also published quarterly in *Industrial Disputes, Australia* (ABS cat. no. 6321.0.55.001).

The quarterly publication *Australian Labour Market Statistics* (ABS cat. no. 6105.0) brings together a wide range of ABS labour data covering demographic characteristics of the labour force, employment and unemployment, labour underutilisation, earnings and labour costs, industrial relations and job vacancies. It also includes feature articles on current labour market issues.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement the restored sample for the Monthly Population Survey – due December 2009
- produce new analytical measures of average weekly earnings resulting from the revised conceptual framework for statistics of employee remuneration – due early 2010
- review the Labour Force Survey design and output strategy – due June 2010
- undertake a feasibility study into the development of a longitudinal Labour Force Survey dataset – due September 2009
- undertake further development of the measures of labour underutilisation – implementation by August 2010, if projects prove feasible
- implement revised Industry and Occupation classifications (Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification and Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) in the Labour Force Survey and labour employer surveys, and undertake backcasting – due progressively to March 2011
- develop and conduct the Survey of Major Labour Costs – due June 2011.

Program Manager

Jason Russo
Assistant Statistician
Economic Analysis and
Reporting Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	1.4
Full costs	2.8

% of total costs 0.9%

Staff usage
10 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	1.5
2010-11	1.6
2011-12	1.6
2012-13	1.7

References

- *Australian Economic Indicators* (cat. no. 1350.0)
- *Measuring the Stock of Human Capital for Australia* (cat. no. 1351.0.55.001)
- *Measuring Human Capital Flows for Australia* (cat. no. 1351.0.55.023)
- *Measuring Option Values and the Economic Benefits of Completing Secondary Education* (cat. no. 1352.0.55.082)
- *Population Ageing and Accumulation of Human Capital in Australia* (cat. no. 1351.0.55.022)

Objectives

The Economic Analysis and Reporting program was established in mid-2007. The program will expand this year to include macro economic and price research functions, and the innovation and technology data management and coordination functions. The expanded program is designed to bring micro and macro economic analysis functions together as part of a consolidated program of statistical research and development.

The program provides enhanced value to ABS business micro-data collections through conducting policy relevant analyses and publishing the findings of those studies. In addition, consultations are conducted with the wider analytical and public policy development community in Australia, to keep pace with evolving analytical and policy imperatives.

The program publishes market sector and industry level estimates of productivity and conducts ongoing research into the measurement and interpretation of productivity estimates. It also compiles and publishes the Australian Economic Indicator series summarising the major macro economic aggregates for the Australian economy.

Together with the Analytical Services Branch and the Social Analysis and Reporting Branch, Economic Analysis and Reporting Branch develops and implements a program of research and analysis in consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

Outputs

The program publishes regular products, namely:

- Annual productivity statistics presented in the *Australian System of National Accounts* (ABS cat.no 5204.0)
- *Experimental Estimates of Industry Multifactor Productivity* (ABS cat. no 5260.0.55.002) – an annual release that presents a range of productivity estimates at the industry level.
- *Australian Economic Indicators* (ABS cat. no 1350.0) – a monthly compendium that is a convenient and comprehensive source of economic time series, including historical data. It also contains feature articles on the analysis and interpretation of data.

Additionally, the program produces research or information papers on the following areas:

- Productivity measurement
- Economic analysis using the Business Longitudinal Database (BLD) and other micro-data sets
- Human capital measurement

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- further explore the potential for better use of micro-data (eg, administrative data) in compiling official economic statistics (ongoing, with increased emphasis from mid-2009)
- develop panel data analysis expertise utilising the Business Longitudinal Database (BLD) and provide micro-data analytical advice to policy agencies and the broader community (2009-10 and ongoing)
- review the existing methodology and assumptions for the measurement of output, capital and labour inputs in productivity measurement, to align with international best practice (current projects for completion mid-2010)
- construct an annual human capital database (commence 2009-10, target mid-2011 completion)
- build collaborative relationships with government agencies and academia and engage with peers internationally (ongoing)
- undertake research to develop and improve measures of productivity for hard-to-measure industries (ongoing)
- Measuring Returns to Post-school Education in Australia – due December 2009

Program Manager

Mike McGrath
Regional Director
South Australian Office

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	0.7
Full costs	1.8

% of total costs 0.5%

Staff usage
7 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	1.0
2010-11	0.8
2011-12	1.3
2012-13	1.4

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
Regional
under Regional
Statistics select
National Regional
Profile

Other references

*Information Paper:
Regional Research
in Australia – the
Statistical Dimension: an
Information Development
Plan for Rural and
Regional Statistics* (cat.
no. 1362.0)
National Regional Profile
(cat. no. 1379.0.55.001)

Objectives

The Rural and Regional Statistics program aims to improve the availability of regional data including data at metropolitan, non-metropolitan, urban and rural levels. Activities undertaken under the program include improving access to, and dissemination of, ABS data and data from other sources, and developing new indicators where feasible. A particular focus of this work is on utilising administrative data maintained by Australian Government and state/territory government agencies, where data have a location identifier with the potential to be used in presenting data geographically. The activities of the Rural and Regional Statistics Program are undertaken by the Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre.

The Rural and Regional Statistics Program provides leadership across the National Statistical Service. It coordinates, produces and disseminates statistics that will: assist policy analysts and researchers understand change across rural, regional and remote areas of Australia; meet the regional policy priority needs of Australian government agencies; and meet the needs of other researchers and policy analysts interested in comparative assessment between regions in different states and territories.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- statistical leadership to improve the access to, availability and quality of regional statistics
- the *National Regional Profile* (ABC cat. no.1379.0.55.001) product – a web-based suite of statistics for regions, including Local Government Areas and other areas in the Main Structure of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification, containing data spanning five years and updated annually
- experimental estimates and indicators from administrative data, such as the Australian Taxation Office personal and business income tax data, and Centrelink data on income support
- *Perspectives on Regional Australia* (ABS cat. nos.1380.0.55.001, 1380.0.55.002, and subsequent) – a series of publications analysing, at varying geographic levels, a range of topics with a particular focus on regions in Australia
- account management of the local government sector with regard to its small area information needs.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- build extensive collaborative working arrangements with stakeholders in the regional statistics field – ongoing
- improve the dissemination of information about the program through a Regional Statistics Newsletter, the theme page on the ABS web site, and other appropriate avenues, such as through client networks, conferences, seminars and workshops – ongoing
- formulate, and then lead the implementation of, a strategy to improve statistical and technological infrastructure to better enable the dissemination of geospatial statistics – ongoing
- implement the recommendations from the Rural and Regional Statistics Information Development Plan, and maintain an awareness of emerging data priority needs – ongoing
- increase the availability of regional statistics, using mesh block/address coder developments to support the geographic classification of administrative data sets, and enable access to high priority data sets through ABS regional statistics databases and other means – ongoing.

Census of Population and Housing

Program Manager

Paul Lowe
Assistant Statistician
Population Census
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	14.6
Full costs	32.0

% of total costs 9.8%

Staff usage
83 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	22.7
2010-11	81.0
2011-12	242.0
2012-13	25.4

References

A wide range of reference and product information, and selected census data, are available from the ABS web site at www.abs.gov.au/census

Objectives

The Census program conducts a five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. Its aims are to accurately and efficiently measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census night. This provides a reliable basis to estimate the population of each state/territory and local government area, primarily for electoral purposes (including determining the number of seats allocated to each State and Territory in the House of Representatives) and for distribution of Government funds to the States including Goods and Services Tax revenue and payments for specific purposes.

The Census is the only source of detailed statistics of the numbers and characteristics of the population and its housing within small geographic areas and for small population groups, covering the whole of Australia. This information supports the planning, administration, policy development and evaluation activities of government, business and others.

Outputs

Online Products

- Census data can be accessed via a range of Online tools. These include QuickStats, MapStats, Census Tables and Community Profiles. In these products Census data is displayed based upon selected location and topic of interest, and can be viewed in different formats including thematic maps or tables.
- CDATA Online: users can create their own tables on a range of topics such as age, education, housing, income, transport, religion, ethnicity, occupation and more. All Census geographies are available.
- Table Builder: users can construct their own tables via an interactive web interface, using a database containing the Census Unit Record File. A range of person, family and dwelling classifications will be available for users to analyse and output will be made available in either tabular, graphical or map based format. Table Builder will be available in August 2009.

Other Products

- The Census sample files of 1% (Basic) and 5% (Expanded) are comprehensive Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) of Census variables, containing a random sample of private households and associated persons, and a small random sample of persons in non-private dwellings.
- Census data packs is a CD-ROM product containing Census data, down to Collection District level, and digital boundaries in generic format.
- Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas. Contains indexes to allow ranking of regions/areas, providing a method of determining the level of social and economic well-being of that region.

Customised Data Services

- Where users' specialised information needs cannot be met by standard products, customised data services are available through ABS Information Consultancy.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the 2006 Census product suite – due Dec 2009
- develop and build core 2011 Census processing systems for initial testing phase – commencing late 2009
- conduct 2011 Census Dress Rehearsal – June 2010
- determine 2011 Census field communications strategy – due June 2010
- finalise 2011 field operations including enumeration strategies – due December 2010.

Program Manager

Paul Jelfs
Assistant Statistician
Health Information and
Social Analysis Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	4.3
Full costs	8.0

% of total costs 2.4%

Staff usage
19 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	4.2
2010-11	4.1
2011-12	4.1
2012-13	4.3

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then Health

under Themes select
People, then Disability,
Ageing and Carers

Objectives

The Health Statistics program provides information about aspects of the health of Australia's population, and about health related services. This includes statistics relating to health status, disability, risk factors and impacts on sub-groups within the population.

Statistics on health and disability describe an important aspect of wellbeing, which can impact on people's capacity to participate in the labour force, and more broadly in the community. Changes in the levels of health measures, such as health conditions, risk factors, and disability, can inform both the development of interventions for prevention and care, and the need for related services over time. These statistics support the policy development, program delivery and evaluation of key government and non-government agencies involved in health, community and family services. They provide information on the impacts of programs and service provision, and can be used to assess areas of unmet need. They are heavily used in research related to health and community issues.

The main clients of the program are Australian government agencies (including the Departments of Health and Ageing, and Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Centrelink; the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; and the Australian Institute of Family Studies), state government agencies, academic and research institutions, and social welfare organisations including those providing health and community services.

Outputs

Outputs of the program include:

- publications and analytical articles that draw from a range of social surveys in the areas of health, disability and carers. Statistical outputs are also available as special tabulations, and through access to Confidentialised Unit Record Files with varying detail released on CD-ROM, the ABS Remote Access Data Laboratory, or for analysis on-site
- information on the health status of the population and associated risk factors, presented in *National Health Survey: Summary of Results* (ABS cat. no.4364.0), and in electronic snapshots which focus on particular conditions, risk factors or population groups
- information on the nature and extent of disability and associated needs for care and support, as well as the impacts on carers, available in *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings* (ABS cat. no.4430.0)
- results from the 2007 Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, providing information about the prevalence and impact of mental health conditions, including use of relevant services.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop the 2010-11 National Health Survey – enumeration from mid 2010
- develop new ongoing Patient Experience Survey to meet COAG requirements – enumeration from mid 2010
- analyse the results from the new 2009 Patient Experience Survey – results due July 2010
- finalise enumeration and begin processing the 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers – results due September 2010
- develop new biennial disability survey – enumeration from 2010-11
- support COAG requirements for data related to health, mental health, disability and carers including the provision of advice, data and quality statements to COAG and related health committees – ongoing
- analyse aspects of health and disability using data from a range of sources – ongoing.

Education and Training

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Indigenous, Education
and Cultural Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.1
Full costs	3.9

% of total costs 1.2%

Staff usage
13 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	2.6
2010-11	2.3
2011-12	2.1
2012-13	2.2

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then Education
and Training

Objectives

The Education and Training Statistics program covers the activities of the National Centre for Education and Training Statistics (NCETS), which include the development and compilation of statistics from national administrative collections and the conduct of a number of surveys relevant to learning in Australia.

Key elements of the program in this field include the expansion of the annual National Schools Statistics collection to a comprehensive whole of education system statistical information base; the regular conduct of a number of surveys related to education, training and work; and the work of the National Education and Training Statistics Unit. This Unit, in partnership with other government agencies that have responsibility for education and training policies and programs, promotes greater comparability of information across the various education and training sectors and addresses issues such as standards, collaboration, efficiency and resource use across the sectors.

NCETS is closely involved in supporting information needs of the COAG Productivity Agenda, through data development activities that will support a life cycle view of education in Australia and provide a detailed information base to underpin the COAG performance targets. The Centre plays an important role in conceptual and standards development within the education and training sector.

The ABS receives advice on emerging issues and priorities in education and training from its main clients, through involvement in key governance groups. The main clients of the Education and Training Statistics program are: the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs; the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment; the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; state and territory government departments responsible for education, training and early childhood development; the National Centre for Vocational Education Research; academic and research institutions; and education providers.

Outputs

The key outputs of the program are:

- statistics released annually from the Survey of Education and Work and the National Schools Statistics Collection
- summary publications and Confidentialised Unit Record Files and datacubes released from regular household surveys such as the Survey of Education and Training, and the Childhood Education and Care Survey
- analytical and comparative analysis of data for the indicators relevant to COAG National Agreements
- a statistical information and dissemination service for education and training statistics; the electronic publication *A Directory of Education and Training Statistics* (ABS cat. no.1136.0); periodic snapshots on thematic issues related to learning in Australia; and the maintenance of an education and training statistics theme page on the ABS web site
- activities aimed at developing and promoting national classifications and standards for education and training statistics, through the *Measuring Learning in Australia* series of information papers
- statistical leadership, including engaging with clients through committee representation, an ABS network of state liaison officers, a review of education and training finance statistics, and the publication of occasional research papers such as the *Information Paper: Measuring Learning in Australia: Concepts and Directions in Early Childhood Learning* (ABS cat. no.4232.0).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- conduct the annual Survey of Education and Work and publish results – due November each year
- develop, conduct and publish results from the Survey of Education and Training – due May 2010
- develop and test content for the 2011 Survey of Adult Competencies – 2011
- expand the National Schools Statistics Collection to a comprehensive whole of education system statistical information base, including early childhood, school, vocational and higher education – end of 2012
- provide data and analysis to support an improved information base for indicator reporting against the COAG national agreements and national partnerships on early childhood education, school education, and skills and workforce development – ongoing
- undertake projects for the National Education and Training Statistics Unit Management Board, including work on quality statistics on early childhood education; and thematic snapshots on issues related to learning in Australia – ongoing
- further develop quality indicators of early childhood education – ongoing.

Program Manager

Carl Obst
Assistant Statistician
Regional Director
Victorian office

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.6
Full costs	5.0

% of total costs 1.5%

Staff usage
17 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	2.4
2010-11	2.4
2011-12	2.5
2012-13	2.6

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then Crime and
Justice

Objectives

The Crime and Justice Statistics program leads national statistical activity aimed at developing and improving the information available in this field. The program covers the activities of the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics, which comprises three separate user-funded statistical units: the National Crime Statistics Unit; the National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit; and the National Corrective Services Statistics Unit. These units compile and publish national statistics on recorded crime, courts and corrections, and work to improve the quality of these collections in cooperation with statistical practitioners in the jurisdictions. Boards of Management oversee the work of each of the units. Board Members include jurisdictional representatives responsible for police services, courts administration and corrective services.

The program provides support for, and development of, statistics in broader crime and justice statistical issues such as those identified within the Information Paper: *National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice (NIDP)* (ABS cat. no.4520.0). This publication presents the results of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, together with agreed priorities and a plan of action for the development of crime and justice information.

The ABS also oversees a survey program in the field of crime and justice statistics. This includes both special purpose surveys aimed at producing rates of victimisation for personal and household crimes, and information on the experience and consequences of crime; as well as more general surveys aimed at understanding the experience of crime within a broader social context.

The main clients of this program include the Australian Attorney-General's Department and the state and territory agencies responsible for police services, courts administration and corrective services. Agencies responsible for criminal justice research and policy are also significant users of program outputs.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- indicators of the level and nature of recorded crime victimisation in Australia presented annually in *Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4510.0)
- characteristics of defendants, including information on their offences and sentences, available annually in *Criminal Courts, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4513.0)
- information from the National Prisoner Census on persons held in adult prisons, including their characteristics, sentence lengths and offences for which they are imprisoned, published annually in *Prisoners in Australia* (ABS cat. no.4517.0)
- quarterly *Corrective Services, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4512.0), which presents information on numbers and rates of persons in custody and those serving community-based corrections orders
- outputs to promote national standards for crime and justice statistics; recent examples include revised classifications such as the Australian Standard Offence Classification and the National Offence Index, the development of a national crime recording standard for police statistics, and the family and domestic violence conceptual framework.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement the annual crime victimisation survey program – first results early 2010
- release data about federal offenders – due early 2010
- implement the Australian Standard Offence Classification within crime and justice collections – due end 2010
- conduct a feasibility study on sentence quantum as part of the criminal courts collection – due end 2012
- in collaboration with data providers, improve the range, quality and availability of data collected through administrative systems in police, courts and corrective services sectors with a focus on improving Indigenous identification – ongoing
- support efforts to improve information on recidivism, and family and domestic violence – ongoing.

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Indigenous, Education
and Cultural Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	3.7
Full costs	7.7

% of total costs 2.4%

Staff usage
20 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	3.8
2010-11	3.6
2011-12	3.8
2012-13	4.0

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then
Indigenous

Objectives

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics program covers the activities of the ABS National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (NCATSIS), the development and conduct of ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander surveys, and other Indigenous statistics produced by the ABS. NCATSIS has responsibility for leadership and coordination of national statistical activity about Australia's Indigenous peoples, both across the ABS and more broadly. This includes consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and working in collaboration with a broad range of external agencies to achieve relevant and appropriate information.

NCATSIS undertakes analyses of data on selected topics of major social significance in the field and, through written reports, informs users of the outcomes of these analyses. NCATSIS plays a role in data development, and implements an Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy to facilitate the return of information to Indigenous communities and organisations and maintain dialogue on data collection and use.

The key elements in the program include: the development, conduct and dissemination of results from the six-yearly National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) and the six-yearly National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS); Indigenous enumeration in the 5-yearly Census of Population and Housing; and production of Indigenous population and associated life-expectancy estimates following each Census. Both the NATSISS and the NATSIHS are designed to produce national and state/territory estimates for remote and non-remote areas.

The main clients of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics program are Australian and state and territory government agencies, Indigenous communities and organisations, and academic and research institutions.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- publications and other statistical products such as *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey* (ABS cat. no.4715.0) and *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* (ABS cat. no.4714.0); publications and other statistical products from the Census of Population and Housing, such as *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians* (ABS cat. no.4713.0); statistical research and analysis and the production of web-based reports for a range of audiences, including government, Indigenous people and their communities, researchers and the general public; contribution to regular national compendium reports such as *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (ABS cat. no.4704.0) (jointly produced by ABS and AIHW); statistical leadership to improve Indigenous statistics on population, mortality, health, housing, community services, education, employment, and law and justice; provision of subject matter expertise to other areas of the ABS conducting census and survey collections, or analysing Indigenous data; and coordinating and promoting improvements in Indigenous statistics from administrative collections.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- release first results from the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) – second half of 2009
- continue development of the 2010-11 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) – for enumeration in 2010-11
- improve, and report on, the quality of Indigenous status information in key administrative sources – ongoing
- continue to strengthen the Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy to build stronger relationships with Indigenous communities and increase their statistical capacity by enhancing Indigenous organisation and community awareness and use of available data, and manage provider load on communities – ongoing
- support work on Indigenous statistics in the broader ABS work program including development of a statistical framework for guiding the measurement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing, the updating of Indigenous population estimates, projections and life expectancy following each Census, output of Indigenous labour force estimates from the Labour Force Survey, and initial work on measuring Indigenous business activity – ongoing
- support a wide range of clients in accessing and analysing Indigenous statistics from ABS and administrative collections, including those required for performance monitoring of Council of Australian Governments reform initiatives, the Report on Government Services, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Framework – ongoing.

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	5.0
Full costs	8.8
% of total costs	2.7%

Staff usage
12 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	10.4
2010-11	9.1
2011-12	8.3
2012-13	6.3

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then Personal,
Family and Household
Finances
Under Themes select
People, then Housing

Objectives

The Living Conditions Statistics program provides information about the material living conditions of the population within a framework of areas of social concern and population groups. Household income, wealth, expenditure, housing, superannuation and other aspects of material living conditions are central to monitoring material wellbeing. Related areas of measurement and analysis include economic hardship and financial stress, which help to provide a wider picture of the material circumstances and living conditions of Australians.

Material wellbeing statistics describe the circumstances and situation of the population and monitor changes in living conditions over time. They are used to support policy development, program delivery and program evaluation of key government agencies involved in social security, taxation, housing, and community and family services. They provide information on needs for, and impacts of, programs and service provision, and can be used to assess areas of unmet need.

The main clients of the program are Australian government agencies (including the Departments of: Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Health and Ageing; Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; and the Treasury; Centrelink, and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), state/territory government agencies, academic and research institutions, and social welfare organisations.

Outputs

Outputs of the program include a range of publications, and the associated confidentialised unit record files regarding:

- information on the economic wellbeing of the population derived from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) and the Survey of Income and Housing (SIH) published in *Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results* (ABS cat. no.6530.0) and in *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6523.0)
- additional information provided in *Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4130.0.55.001) and *Household Wealth and Wealth Distribution, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6554.0)
- data from the HES, Input-Output tables and public sector financial accounts which are brought together to estimate the incidence of government benefits and taxes for various population groups – results are published in *Government Benefits, Taxes and Household Income, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6537.0)
- information about the superannuation of Australians derived from the Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation published in *Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6361.0)
- estimates of imputed rent, initially published in *Experimental Estimates of Imputed Rent, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6525.0), and updated as an appendix (and in the associated CURFs) with each issue of 6523.0
- information and analysis about living conditions published in a wide variety of omnibus releases, including analysis of the population census as well as survey datasets. Information and analysis about financial stress and financial hardship, derived from surveys, are released both in survey specific products and in omnibus releases.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- publish results from the 2007-08 Survey of Income and Housing – due July 2009
- publish revised household income standards – due October 2009
- publish an information development plan for housing statistics – due October 2009
- publish housing characteristics results from the 2007-08 Survey of Income and Housing – due November 2009
- publish a framework for the measurement and analysis of low household consumption possibilities – due December 2009
- as chair of an international task force, lead and contribute to an update of the 'Canberra Group' Handbook on Household Income Statistics – due November 2010
- publish a framework and standards for statistics on household income, expenditure and wealth – due June 2011
- develop, conduct and publish results from the 2009-10 Household Income and Expenditure Survey – due June 2011.

Family and Community

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	1.7
Full costs	3.2

% of total costs 1.0%

Staff usage
11 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	4.4
2010-11	4.2
2011-12	5.0
2012-13	1.6

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then Family and
Community Statistics
Under Themes select
People, then Social
Capital
Under Themes select
People, then Children
and Youth
Under Themes select
People, then Ageing

Objectives

The Family and Community Statistics program provides leadership for, and information on, statistics related to family and community wellbeing within a framework of areas of social concern and population groups. It provides statistics from collections including those based on registration systems (such as for marriages and divorces), the Census of Population and Housing, the monthly population survey (including topics on families, pregnancy and employment transitions, and child care), and from surveys of families, time use, volunteering, work and family balance, and social capital. Statistics are provided for women, men, couples, one-parent families, children, youth, older people, carers and other population subgroups.

The statistical focus is on outcomes and status within the population, including the demand for and use of services, as well as monitoring changes over time. Statistics support policy development, program delivery and program evaluation by government agencies involved in social security, taxation, community and family services, and issues related to older people, children, youth, men and women.

The program provides strong support for the Growing up in Australia Study (Longitudinal Study of Australian Children), in partnership with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

The main clients of the program are Australian government agencies (including the Departments of: Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; Health and Ageing; Prime Minister and Cabinet; Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; and the Treasury; the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and the Australian Institute of Family Studies), state/territory government agencies, academic and research institutions, and social welfare organisations.

Outputs

Outputs include development and promotion of standard frameworks, concepts and definitions; products from the Census and surveys in the areas of family, child care, time use, volunteering, work and family balance, social capital, and community engagement; and analyses related to sub-populations. Key publications, and the associated confidentialised unit record files include:

- *General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4159.0): a profile of the socioeconomic characteristics of Australia's adult population with data on a range of social dimensions of the community
- information about how men and women spend their time, including unpaid household and community work from time use surveys, published in *How Australians Use Their Time* (ABS cat. no.4153.0) and *Unpaid Work and the Australian Economy* (ABS cat. no.5240.0)
- Family Characteristics and Transitions, Australia (ABS cat. no.4442.0): information about changing patterns of family and household composition, family transitions and relationship history
- information about work and family balance in the published in the six yearly *Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6361.0)
- information about volunteering, published in *Voluntary Work, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4441.0)
- information about families and their circumstances, available from sources including the Census of Population and Housing, the Labour Force Survey, and specialised publications such as *Family Characteristics, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4442.0), *Child Care, Australia* (cat. no.4402.0), and *Pregnancy and Employment Transitions, Australia* (ABS cat. no.4913.0)
- a research paper: Exploring Measures of Low Social Capital (ABS cat. no.1351.0.55.024)
- annual publication of progress against data development actions identified in: *Improving Statistics on Children and Youth – an Information Development Plan, 2006* (ABS cat. no.4907.0)
- final input files derived from the development, enumeration and initial processing for the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children.

Developments

The main medium term developments are to:

- develop wave four of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children to incorporate major improvements to enumeration such as audio-assisted computer self-interviewing for children taking part in the study – due February 2010
- develop and publish, in consultation with key stakeholders, a family statistics framework to support ongoing data development activities – due June 2010
- publish results from the 2009-10 Family Characteristics Survey – due April 2011
- redevelop, and publish results from, the 2010 General Social Survey – due August 2011
- finalise development of the next (2011) cycle of the Pregnancy and Employment Transitions Survey – due September 2011 for enumeration in November 2011
- support ongoing national and international efforts to develop standard approaches to measuring family and community related data items (eg family types, unpaid work, voluntary work, community strength) – ongoing.

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	1.5
Full costs	2.8

% of total costs 0.9%

Staff usage
9 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	1.5
2010-11	1.6
2011-12	1.6
2012-13	1.7

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then Culture
and Recreation

Objectives

The Culture and Recreation Statistics program covers the activities of the ABS National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics (NCCRS). The NCCRS has responsibility for the leadership and coordination of national statistical activity in the fields of culture, sport and leisure. Its activities include understanding current and emerging policy issues and debates, and determining what statistics might be appropriate to inform decision making. It also provides expertise within the ABS regarding the collection of relevant data, as well as informing governments and the community about culture, sport and leisure statistics, relevant classifications and standards, and appropriate data analysis.

The main clients of the program are the Cultural Ministers Council, the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council, Australian government agencies (including the Department of Health and Ageing; the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; the Australia Council, the Australian Film Commission, and the Australian Sports Commission), state and territory government departments (in both the culture and sport sectors), and industry bodies.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- statistical activities aimed at developing and promoting national standards, frameworks, classifications and definitions for culture and recreation statistics such as *Australian Culture and Leisure Classifications* (ABS cat. no.4902.0); *Towards Comparable Statistics for Cultural Heritage Organisations* (ABS cat. no.4916.0); and *Sport and Exercise, A Conceptual Model* (ABS cat. no.4149.0)
- leading the development, coordination and specification of statistical data needs as articulated in the arts and cultural heritage Information Development Plan; ongoing liaison with data users regarding their needs; reviewing strategic directions; and advice on client research projects
- a statistical information and dissemination service for culture, sport and leisure data, including the provision of publications and reports using data from ABS collections; a culture and recreation theme page on the ABS web site; and production of a regular newsletter
- a statistical service responsible for developing data collections, analysing data and releasing data on: government funding for cultural activities; participation in cultural and leisure activities by adults and children; attendance at culture and sport venues; cultural participation; and involvement in organised sport and physical activities
- compendium publications on arts and culture and on sport and physical recreation that provide statistical summaries of available data
- the provision of advice to clients, including inter-agency statistical working groups involved in the culture and sport sectors.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review the impact of the release of *Towards Comparable Statistics for Cultural Heritage Organisations* (ABS cat. no.4916.0). Identify issues and barriers related to the adoption of identified core data elements and best practice methodologies for data collection – due May 2010
- liaise with external researchers in the field to meet research needs as articulated in the arts and cultural heritage Information Development Plan in collaboration with the Cultural Ministers Council Statistics Working Group – ongoing
- review data needs for sport and physical recreation data, paying particular attention to the collection of high priority sport participation and exercise data. Utilise the discussion paper on *Sport and Exercise; A Conceptual Model* (ABS cat. no.4149.0) as the basis for development of future collections – ongoing
- continue to analyse culture and sport data from various ABS household surveys, including: the General Social Survey; Children's Participation in Culture and Leisure Activities; Cultural Participation; and Involvement in Organised Sport and Physical Activities – ongoing
- increase standardisation of culture and sport statistical sources by leading the development of relevant standards – ongoing
- improve the dissemination of information through the theme page on the ABS web site, and other appropriate avenues, such as through client networks, conferences, seminars and workshops – ongoing.

Program Manager

Paul Jelfs
Assistant Statistician
Health Information and
Social Analysis Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.4
Full costs	4.7

% of total costs 1.5%

Staff usage
15 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	2.3
2010-11	2.5
2011-12	2.7
2012-13	2.9

Objectives

The Social Analysis and Reporting program informs government and the community about social conditions and progress in Australia. It draws together data and analysis both from within the ABS and from a range of other sources, and produces reports covering a wide range of issues. The reports include analysis of current circumstances, how circumstances have changed over time, how different groups of people have been affected, and how various factors may have accounted for observed trends. The reports provide information on the wellbeing of the population, the extent of need and disadvantage in society, contemporary social issues, the interrelationships between economic, social and environmental aspects of life, and whether life in Australia is getting better.

The program is also responsible for providing leadership and coordination relating to the conceptual organisation of social statistics including the overall social statistics framework and related conceptual models. The framework's two primary dimensions – areas of social concern and population groups – are central to ABS social statistics collection and reporting activity.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are reports that take a cross-cutting approach and bring together information on the situation of Australians across a range of areas of concern and for a variety of population groups of interest. The reports describe aspects of Australian life and how these are changing over time. The key publications are:

- *Australian Social Trends* (ABS cat. no.4102.0) – a quarterly flagship publication that contains articles on contemporary social issues and a range of social indicators covering major areas of social concern (such as health, work, and family and community)
- *Measures of Australia's Progress* (ABS cat. no.1370.0), published electronically is an annual web-based product that presents a national summary of economic, social and environmental progress through indicators and descriptive text.

Other outputs include:

- Seminars based on *Australian Social Trends* (ABS cat. no.4102.0) and *Measures of Australia's Progress* (ABS cat. no.1370.0), conducted across Australia regularly for key stakeholders.
- Analysis of social data sets addressing technical and social issues and contributing to the Analytical Community forward work program.

Developments

The main medium-term developments in the program are to:

- continue the quarterly publication of *Australian Social Trends* (ABS cat. no.4102.0), ensuring that the articles and social indicators reflect current and emerging social concerns and that the delivery of the publication through the web is kept up to date and engaging for stakeholders – ongoing
- under the guidance of the NSS Board and the MAP Expert Steering Committee, review content to ensure the relevance of *Measures of Australia's Progress* (ABS cat. no.1370.0) and to more widely promote its use in the community through the development of an interactive web-based delivery mechanism – ongoing
- further strengthen the analytical outputs through research and development papers and working collaboratively with a range of external stakeholders – ongoing.

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	1.0
Full costs	1.9

% of total costs 0.6%

Staff usage
7 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	0.7
2010-11	0.8
2011-12	0.8
2012-13	0.8

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

under Themes select
People, then Migrant
& Ethnicity

Objectives

The Migrant Statistics program covers the activities of the ABS National Migrant Statistics Unit, which focuses on temporary and permanent migrant settlement within Australia. The unit provides data relevant to migrant populations, and is involved in the development and compilation of a range of survey and administrative data outputs relevant to migrants. Activities include understanding current and emerging policy issues and debates, and determining what statistics might be appropriate to inform decision making relevant to migrants and diverse ethnic groups. The program also provides expertise within the ABS regarding the collection of relevant data, as well as informing governments and the community about migrant and ethnicity statistics, relevant classifications and standards, and appropriate data analysis.

The major stakeholders of the program are the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, and the various government agencies providing services to migrant and ethnic groups, including state and territory governments.

Outputs

Major program outputs include:

- statistics released in the triennial *Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Recent Migrants, Australia* (ABS cat. no.6250.0)
- the *Guide to Migrant Statistical Sources* (ABS cat no.3414.0) which contains information relating to ABS and non-ABS data
- the *Migrant Data Matrices* (ABS cat. no.3415.0)
- the *Perspectives on Migrants* (ABS cat. no.3416.0) series which provides an analysis of data from ABS and other sources to provide a more comprehensive picture of migrants
- a migrant and ethnicity theme page on the ABS web site
- statistical activities aimed at promoting and developing national standards such as frameworks, classifications and definitions (e.g. Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity, ABS cat no.1289.0)
- coordination and specification of statistical data needs through consultation with data users and establishing statistical developments to meet those needs
- coordination of ABS activity to ensure that issues relevant to migrants are taken into account in statistical development activities.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate data associated with humanitarian arrivals to determine if there is concordance between visa type, year of arrival and country of birth that could be applied to survey data – December 2009
- explore, assess and utilise the administrative data holdings of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship – June 2010
- review the Labour Force and Other Characteristics of Recent Migrants survey planned for November 2010 including: evaluating content; exploring options for improved question wording; and assessing options for revising/expanding the range of topics covered by the survey – due June 2010
- undertake further quality assessment of the migrant component of the ABS Census Data Enhancement project – due June 2010
- explore, assess and utilise administrative data held within other government agencies – ongoing
- seek advice from the Migrant Statistics Advisory Group about major data needs and priorities with respect to migrant and ethnicity related issues – ongoing.

Analytical Services

Program Manager

Jill Charker
Assistant Statistician
Analytical Services
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.6
Full costs	-

% of total costs	-
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Staff usage
23 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	2.5
2010-11	2.8
2011-12	2.9
2012-13	3.0

Objectives

The Analytical Services program develops new analytical products and provides analysis services to producers and users of social and economic data. Its major areas of focus include time series analysis (including seasonal adjustment), the construction and interpretation of socio-economic indexes, the development of data confidentialisation methodology, and general modelling and forecasting.

The provision of new and innovative analytical products, such as modelled estimates, indexes and other analysis, are an important contribution of the Analytical Services program for improving ABS processes and for influencing external policy development and decision making. Data confidentialisation methods, especially when applied to microdata files, allow researchers outside ABS to undertake much more detailed analyses of their own on statistical data than would otherwise be the case.

Time series in seasonally adjusted and trend form are an important input to policy formation, decision making and research in government, academia and the private sector. Government users include Commonwealth economic policy agencies (especially the Treasury and the Reserve Bank of Australia), State Treasuries, the Commonwealth Government, State Governments, and local government service delivery agencies.

Outputs

The program's main products include specialist analytical support for improving existing ABS methodology, and the development of new analytical products for potential dissemination to data users and others in the National Statistical Service. The program develops a range of analytical products including new time series, analytical frameworks, databases and models to measure socioeconomic concepts. Additionally, the program undertakes ongoing methodological development work to protect the confidentiality of microdata files and tabular outputs.

The outputs of this work are disseminated via a series of *Research Papers* (ABS cat. no.1351.0). These papers may contain analytical work in preliminary stages, in order to stimulate discussion and feedback. Time series products and analyses appear in many ABS publications on a regular basis.

The program also publishes two regular products. *The Modellers' Database* (ABS cat. no.1364.0.15.003) is used by economists to understand and forecast short and medium term developments in the Australian macro-economy. It was developed by the Treasury and is maintained jointly by the Treasury and the ABS. *The Treasury Model of the Australian Economy – TSP Version* (ABS cat. no.1364.0.15.001) permits users to run forecasts and to simulate the effects of policy settings. Both are released quarterly.

Developments

The main medium-term developments in the program are:

- ongoing analysis into data linking methodology to support the creation of the Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset – due December 2009
- the development and implementation of methods to manage the time series impacts from introducing a new industry classification (ANZSIC 2006) – due December 2009
- a review of the suitability of tax data in analysis applications – due December 2010
- applied analysis to understand area-level variations in the measurement of social capital – due March 2010
- methods that will expand access to ABS unit record data and detailed tables while still safeguarding the confidentiality of data – due September 2010
- feasibility analysis of methods of data combining and data poling – due December 2011
- collaboration with universities through partnering in Australian Research Council linkage grants in the areas of productivity and economic measurement, and small area estimation – ongoing.

Infrastructure and Services



Geography

Program Manager

Denis Farrell
First Assistant
Statistician
Population and
Environment Statistics
Division

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.6
Full costs	-

% of total costs	-
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Staff usage
25 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	2.7
2010-11	2.8
2011-12	2.5
2012-13	2.8

Objectives

The Geography program has the following objectives:

- to set, maintain and promote statistical geography, mapping and Geographic Information System (GIS) standards for the ABS
- to improve ABS' capability in spatial statistics by implementing appropriate GIS and geocoding technology for the collection, production and dissemination of such statistics
- to provide geographic analysis, mapping and GIS support services for the ABS.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- annual maintenance and publication of the *Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) – Electronic Structures* (ABS cat. no.1216.0.15.001), the classification manual *Statistical Geography Volume 1 – Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)* (ABS cat. no.1216.0), and digital map boundaries
- development and implementation of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard, to replace the ASGC from July 2011
- geographic correspondences for relating statistics on one geographic area to another
- the ABS Master Spatial Database
- design of geographical areas and mapping to support the execution of the Census of Population and Housing
- development and support of geographical products to support ABS users such as the corporate address coder, interactive spatial coder
- advice and support services, including training, to meet the mapping, address coding, GIS, geographical classification and spatial data management needs of the ABS and external clients.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- undertake a program of work for the Census including collector workload area design and provision of workload maps for Census field operations – due March 2011
- review the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), develop, publish and implement a new Australian Statistical Geography Standard – due July 2011
- continue to revise and publish the ASGC (ABS cat. no.1216.0) and associated digital boundaries and correspondences – due in July each year until 2011
- revise mesh block boundaries to reflect growth and changes to the topographic base mapping in preparation for the 2011 Census of Population and Housing and the Agricultural Census – ongoing
- engage with internal and external users to promote and support the transition to the new mesh block based Australian Statistical Geography Standard – ongoing
- undertake spatial analysis and mapping projects in conjunction with subject matter areas – ongoing
- improve address coding systems, based on working with the Public Sector Mapping Agencies (PSMA) and State land agencies to improve the Geocoded National Address File and also by supplementing this data with internal address information, such as specialised dwellings – ongoing
- provide input into ABS development of corporate “spatially enabled” systems – ongoing.

Program Manager

Michael Beahan
Assistant Statistician
Data Management and
Classifications Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	2.4
Full costs	-

% of total costs	-
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Staff usage
32 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	2.6
2010-11	1.9
2011-12	1.9
2012-13	1.9

References

At www.abs.gov.au
select Methods,
Classifications,
Concepts & Standards
on the horizontal
navigation bar

Objectives

The Data Management and Classifications program provides important support functions that underpin the ABS mission. The program is responsible for promoting the comparability, integration and quality of ABS statistics, through the use of standard concepts, definitions, classifications and procedures. It is also responsible for the infrastructure used to hold key definitional metadata and to store statistical data from which ABS outputs are sourced.

The program seeks to achieve this by:

- setting and reviewing ABS policies and principles for key statistical standards and classifications, and for data and metadata management best practice
- developing, maintaining and reviewing related infrastructure
- providing leadership and support to subject matter areas on the implementation of key standards, practices and procedures
- providing advice and assistance on the application of Australian statistical and data management standards to official bodies.

Outputs

Key outputs from the programs cover the following areas:

- development and maintenance of key national standards on statistical units, concepts, definitions, questions and classifications that underpin population, social and economic statistics
- development and maintenance of key infrastructure and processes for implementing relevant standards and classifications across ABS collections
- continuity of Information Warehouse and Corporate Metadata Repository infrastructure that underpin the production of ABS statistics
- data management policies and best practice advice to subject matter areas
- data management and metadata guidelines and advice for the National Statistical Service.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- assist in and track the implementation of ANZSIC 06 across ABS economic and population statistical collections; assist external users to understand and manage the resultant impacts – ongoing to December 2009
- develop an implementation guide and training material to support the adoption of the International Central Product Classification – due June 2010
- review ANZSCO to ensure that it remains relevant by identifying emerging occupations – due June 2012
- review ANZSIC 06 to ensure that it remains relevant by identifying emerging industries – due June 2013
- review and maintain key statistical standards and classifications for ABS population, social and economic statistics – ongoing
- promulgate relevant standards for population and economic statistics on the ABS intranet and ABS website – ongoing
- maintain and improve autocoding facilities and computer assisted coding indexes – ongoing
- provide training and assistance to subject matter areas in the use and/or development of statistical standards and associated tools for their implementation – ongoing
- maintain and extend the ABS Information Warehouse as the central, authoritative repository for holding, managing and sourcing output data – ongoing
- re-develop, align and integrate key data and metadata management infrastructure with mainstream input processing, output production and data archiving systems as proposed in the End to End Metadata Management Strategy – ongoing
- design, develop and implement data and metadata management models, practices and infrastructure for the National Statistical Service – ongoing.

Integrated Collections

Program Manager

Donna Nicholson
Assistant Statistician A/g
Integrated Collections
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	42.2
Full costs	-
% of total costs	-

Staff usage
225 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	52.7
2010-11	49.4
2011-12	52.4
2012-13	44.9

References

Information for Survey
Participants
At www.abs.gov.au
select Survey Participant
Information on the
horizontal navigation
bar

*Household/Business
Surveys Charter*
At www.abs.gov.au
select Survey Participant
Information on the
horizontal navigation
bar, then Household/
Business Surveys
Charter

Objectives

Integrated Collections, established in mid 2007, provides a data collection service for the ABS across business, household and administrative data collections. In doing so, it supports the ABS corporate mission and objectives by providing a high quality, timely and cost effective service while maintaining the trust and cooperation of providers through:

- developing and maintaining a skilled and committed home and office-based interviewer workforce
- developing and adopting the world's best practice in data collection
- improving and integrating ABS data collection business and systems processes
- providing support for data collection cost modelling and workforce capacity planning
- upholding the confidentiality of information provided to the ABS
- continually improving the processes and instruments to improve the interaction with providers.

Outputs

The main outputs of Integrated Collections are:

- data collection and capture capability for ABS surveys and administrative sources
- advice to subject matter areas on issues related to the collection of data from both administrative sources and ABS surveys
- survey frames for ABS surveys
- ABS survey and administrative data collection systems, procedures and instruments
- cleansed datasets, including administrative unit record data and ABS survey data.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- integrate data collection processes across household and business based collections where effective and according to agreed Corporate directions – due June 2011
- identify and progress processes and systems supporting data collection operations, including electronic data reporting options and modernisation of field collection technology – ongoing
- implement and administer the ABS field Interviewers Certified Agreement – ongoing
- increase the extent of administrative data acquisition undertaken by the ABS including greater use of corporate facilities – ongoing
- implement tailored instruments to better meet provider needs, and improve the efficiency of the capture of data from those forms – ongoing
- improve the management of data received electronically, including automatic dispatch and up-loading – due June 2009
- develop, implement and administer a variety of provider feedback mechanisms – due June 2010
- implement a reviewed and, where effective, integrated household and business survey charter – end 2009
- develop and implement a new household survey sampling system based on the new Australian Standard Geographical Classification – due 2012.

Customer Services

Program Manager

Kim Farley-Larmour
Assistant Statistician A/g
Customer Services
Branch

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	13.0
Full costs	-
% of total costs	-

Staff usage
92 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	13.1
2010-11	12.9
2011-12	12.9
2012-13	13.4

Objectives

The Customer Services program supports the ABS mission by assisting business partners to effectively communicate official statistics through a wide range of high quality information products and services and communication channels.

The program's key objectives are to maximise the use and users of ABS statistics; optimising the mix of dissemination channels and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of statistical communication. The program seeks to utilise leading edge communication and dissemination technology and aspires to showcase 'best practice' communication of official statistics. It provides and uses market intelligence to identify and meet the statistical needs of ABS clients and customers, including governments, businesses, media, educational institutions, libraries, other private organisations and members of the community generally.

The program provides a range of information solutions for customers – from a telephone referral service, through user-pays consultancies, to supporting the complex needs of clients through improved access to, and use of, microdata. It is responsible for developing a national approach to improving statistical literacy across selected areas of the Australian population.

The Customer Services program works with ABS business partners to provide many of the services and processes by which statistical releases are prepared. The program helps business partners produce web content efficiently and effectively, with minimum effort on their behalf, and provides the tools, training and processes to help achieve this. Additionally, the program ensures that the presentation and usability of ABS products are enhanced by the use of relevant standards developed based on objective research.

Outputs

The main output of the program is in the provision of a range of ABS product and delivery options to clients and customers, which includes:

- the ABS web site <http://www.abs.gov.au> as the primary vehicle for ABS statistical communication
- electronic publications, dynamic census data, datacubes and time series spreadsheets that are published to the ABS website
- information consultancies, providing data that are tailored to customers' needs
- Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs), which are available in CD-ROM format, via the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL™) or ABS Site Data Laboratory (ABSDL)
- telephone information and referral services
- outreach and statistical training programs provided across Australia
- lesson plans for teachers and interactive activities for school students
- training and help in support of business partner delivery of statistical products to the web
- managing all pre-release embargo lockup arrangements.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate output data store options for the provision of online interactive data services to clients – 2009/10
- finalise improvements to functionality, usability and increase the audit capability of RADL™/ABSDL – 2009/10
- extend Creative Commons licences to customised data requests – 2009/10
- move towards a centrally managed Information Consultancy service – 2009/10 & 2010/11
- work towards improved use of ABS statistics by small and medium businesses – 2009/10 & 2010/11
- continuously improve the ABS website, in particular to improve search facilities, navigation and presentation of data – ongoing from July 2009
- remediate and work towards replacement of ageing dissemination systems and website – ongoing from July 2009
- increase statistical literacy, particularly within the schools sector, and participate in the International Census at School program – ongoing
- capture, understand and report evidence about information consumption needs and behaviours of the Australian community – ongoing.

Program Manager

Geoff Lee
First Assistant
Statistician
Methodology and Data
Management Division

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	8.9
Full costs	-

% of total costs -

Staff usage
85 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	9.4
2010-11	9.1
2011-12	9.4
2012-13	9.8

References

*Methodology Research
Papers series* (cat. no.
1352.0)

Objectives

The Methodology program provides specialist services to meet new and ongoing demands in statistics. Much of the work has the goal of ensuring the methods underlying ABS outputs are based on sound, defensible statistical principles and are cost effective.

The program has specific responsibilities for supporting the statistical collection process. It provides advice on survey design and methods, and on data quality, through all stages of the survey cycle. It also provides leadership in developing the future methodological infrastructure of the ABS. The program also undertakes research on statistical methods to improve the efficiency and accuracy of ABS work.

Outputs

The program's main internal products include specialist support for survey design, estimation and analysis, and practices and standards for design of data collection instruments. The program applies operation research techniques to improve the cost efficiency of ABS collections. It conducts quality reviews of methods and statistical products that contribute to improvements in data quality and to reductions in the load on providers. The program supports the development of training courses on mathematical, statistical and other methodological issues for all ABS staff.

Externally, the program produces a series of *Research Papers* (ABS cat.no.1351.0), which present the results of current research or analysis, often of an experimental nature, to encourage discussion and comment. Guidelines on current best practices of statistical methodology are also produced.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- improve tools and procedures for managing the quality of statistical collections, and assist ABS staff to apply those tools and procedures – due June 2010
- improve cost efficiency of survey operations by reviewing cost structures and applying operations research techniques – due June 2010
- improve the methods for editing and processing of price indexes – due December 2010
- develop and implement best practices and standards for collecting survey data by web-forms and other electronic modes – due December 2010
- improve capability for the design and testing of survey questionnaires – due June 2011
- improve the methodology for conduct and processing of population census, for implementation in the 2016 Census – due June 2012
- improve the methodology for the estimation of the indigenous population – due June 2012
- develop sample and estimation methods for new household surveys and business surveys, and redesign/s of existing collections to improve quality and cost efficiency – due June 2012.

Corporate Services

Program Manager

Janet Murphy
First Assistant
Statistician
Corporate Services
Division

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	85.3
Full costs	-

% of total costs	-
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Staff usage
167 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	83.7
2010-11	87.7
2011-12	91.4
2012-13	92.5

Objectives

Corporate Services Division (CSD) will provide leadership and strategic support to assist the ABS to achieve its Strategic Directions through partnering with business areas in the ABS by:

- providing timely, relevant, high quality corporate services to meet the changing needs of internal and external clients
- continuing to implement a strategic planning and budgeting framework to enable the ABS to deliver its work program, within a sustainable resource base
- engaging and influencing stakeholders to ensure ABS' interests are accommodated, including in whole of government initiatives
- positioning the ABS to meet its future workforce needs
- substantially improving the quality of corporate infrastructure and the quality and timeliness of management information
- leading the ABS in the areas of culture, governance, financial and people management, risk management and leadership capability through the Strategic Alignment Program
- developing a strategy to position and shape the ABS nationally to best meet future demands, including reviewing our office structures, how we make best use of our national presence and how we best manage ourselves to achieve clarity of accountability and delivery.

Outputs

Outputs for CSD fall into two categories: services that are delivered to ABS employees and policy advice, framework development and internal consultancy. Services are provided through four organisational groups: Financial Management; Office of the Statistician; Human Resources Branch; and Business Support Branch. Each operates on a national basis, offering services across all offices. Some national business lines are wholly delivered from locations other than central office, e.g. Pay and Entitlements.

The main outputs of CSD's program are:

- a full range of services to support the HR life cycle, from recruitment through to retirement
- leadership, support and guidance to ensure the ABS is maximising individual employees' potential
- a full range of services to support the physical working environment, including implementing changes associated with the strategic use of property and space management
- leadership and consultancy on planning, budgeting, business continuity and financial reporting and support
- governance and secretariat services such as audit, parliamentary liaison and support services to the Australian Statistical Advisory Council
- maintenance and development of corporate support systems and services
- coordination of the provision of statistical data to international organisations; ABS technical assistance to other countries; and programs for overseas visitors to the ABS.

Developments

The main medium term developments are to:

- develop, consult and implement employee framework arrangements that underpin future employment relationships between the ABS and its employees – by December 2010
- develop and implement a new corporate services model based on best practice and benchmarking with corporate services in other organisations – June 2010
- develop and continue to review strategies, through a Workforce Plan, attract, engage, retain and develop a workforce with the right capability, motivation, capacity and flexibility – ongoing from 2009 to 2013.
- implement a single financial management information system – ongoing
- optimise HR and Financial reporting prior to the renewal of corporate systems – ongoing
- support the business outputs of the ABS by ensuring the ongoing development and maintenance of statistical capability, leadership and business skill in the workforce – ongoing.
- review performance management arrangements – December 2010

Technology Services

Program Manager

Jenine Borowik
First Assistant
Statistician
Technology Services
Division

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	31.0
Full costs	-
% of total costs	-

Staff usage
366 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	28.1
2010-11	32.3
2011-12	34.3
2012-13	36.4

Objectives

The key objectives for the Technology Service Division are to:

- ensure the ABS leverages information technology strategically to support its mission through professional ICT services
- ensure the ABS has effective security policy and practices
- represent the ABS and build strategic alliances in the broader ICT, government and National Statistical Office communities overseas in relation to ICT and Security matters.

Behind the key objectives of the Division, there are three business drivers for the coming four year forward work program:

- finding ongoing productivity savings and delivering service value
- implementing, and contributing to, whole of government ICT changes, including requirements and productivity savings of the Gershon Review
- continuing to strengthen ICT planning, professional ICT practice and funding sustainability.

Outputs

The strategic directions and business drivers shape outputs across three Branches in the Division – Technology Infrastructure Branch, Technology Applications Branch and the Technology Strategy and Planning Branch. These branches support the major processes for statistical and administrative functions of the ABS, and maintain and develop the underlying technology systems and infrastructure. The main outputs of the program for the next four years are:

- a full range of application analysis, design, programming, acquisition and commissioning services to assist improving ABS business processes
- leadership on new and developing technologies and their applicability to the ABS
- a reliable and secure technology infrastructure service
- an investment approach to managing the organisation's technology assets
- an effective knowledge management environment
- a rich collaboration environment that supports the work of virtual teams
- development and implementation of enterprise architecture strategies
- use of whole of government strategies for the application of technology to business processes
- leveraging green IT developments.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are:

- an independent review of the health of ABS statistical systems, to form the basis of improved ICT portfolio management practices – due 2009
- improve processing of Tax Data for business substitution purposes – due 2010
- enhancement of the International Trade in Services system – due 2010
- continue development of macro editing capabilities – progressively to 2010
- enhance Input-Output systems for annual publication of Input-Output tables – progressively to 2011
- development of the next generation electronic dissemination architecture – progressively to 2011
- development of new systems supporting ABS work on progress indicators for (COAG) National Agreements in the areas of health, disability, education, and housing – ongoing to 2011-12
- development of new systems to support the creation of a new index to measure expenses in pensioner households – ongoing to 2012-13
- delivering systems and technical support for the conduct, processing and reporting of results from the 2011 Census – progressively up to the release of final results in 2012-13
- eReporting pilot on collecting data via webforms – due 2010
- work with other government agencies on the Commonwealth Spatial Data Integration pilot – ongoing
- migration to new social statistics questionnaire development tool and infrastructure facilities – ongoing
- work on HR remediation project, studying consolidation of HR and finance functions – ongoing
- improve the ABS' ability to publish and communicate data – ongoing
- improve 'end to end' metadata systems – ongoing
- remediation and migration of business systems to updated technology platforms –
- enhance secure network remote access options for staff productivity, emergency preparedness and field data capture – ongoing.

Resources

2008/09	\$m
Direct cost	11.3
Full costs	24.8

% of total costs 7.6%

Staff usage
123 Staff years

Direct Costs	\$m
2009-10	10.1
2010-11	9.7
2011-12	9.7
2012-13	9.8

Objectives

The State and Territory Statistical Services (STSS) program contributes to the development of well informed policy and decisions in states and territories through statistical promotion, leadership and representation. The STSS program supports the ABS objective of an expanded and improved National Statistical Service (NSS) within each state and territory.

The outcomes expected of the STSS program are:

- strong, collaborative relationships with state and territory governments
- a timely, relevant, and responsive statistical service that meets high priority state and territory needs beyond those that can be satisfied by the ABS national programs

as a component of the NSS:

- increased availability of good quality state and territory and regional data from ABS and non-ABS sources that meets high priority state and territory statistical needs, as far as possible within national standards and frameworks
- informed and increased use of state and territory and regional data from ABS and non-ABS sources
- improved application of statistical practice and data sharing across agencies within each jurisdiction
- enhanced ABS decisions from the input of state and territory views to ABS program reviews, research, and other specific work program activities.

Outputs

The main outputs of the STSS project are:

- state and territory government statistical policy/coordination committees, which facilitate collaborative strategies for improved statistical coordination within each jurisdiction
- ongoing assessment of statistical priorities for each state and territory as an input to the ABS forward work program development
- statistical projects designed to meet high priority unmet needs of state and territory governments, including undertaking household surveys on specific topics for individual jurisdictions
- in collaboration with state and territory governments, and as a component of the NSS, projects undertaken to improve the quality, coherence, comparability, and availability of administrative and other data held by state and territory government agencies
- statistical consultancy services covering a wide range of services including survey design, statistical analysis, methodological advice and assistance, and a range of statistical training and development activities
- advice and intelligence to ABS national programs on relevant state and territory statistical needs and issues
- provision of support for the advancement of NSS objectives in the statistical environments of each state and territory
- provision of support to state and territory demography work programs as required.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- undertake statistical projects, including the development and processing of state and territory household surveys – ongoing
- advance statistical work in four priority areas of joint interest to all states and territories – local level demography, statistics on Indigenous Australians, children and youth statistics and local level economic development – ongoing
- enhance ABS contacts and networks with state and territory government agencies, including through the use of strategic outposts, and optimise feedback of relevant statistical information to and from the ABS – ongoing
- identify and evaluate the demand for, and supply of, statistical data, and in collaboration with ABS programs and state and territory governments, develop strategies to fill high priority gaps – ongoing
- support the implementation of the NSS by providing assistance to state and territory governments with a focus on improving the quality of administrative datasets – ongoing.



Statistics User Groups

The user groups advising the ABS on its forward work program include:

National Groups

Advisory Committee on Australian and International Disability Data
Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics
Agriculture Statistics User Forum
Analytical Community Reference Group
Australia-New Zealand Population Workshop
Australian Bureau of Statistics-Australian Taxation Office High Level Liaison Committee
Australian Bureau of Statistics-Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources High Level Liaison Committee
Australian Government Statistical Forum
Energy Statistics Group
Water Statistics User Group
Land and Natural Resource Management Statistics User Group
Childcare and Early Years Learning Survey Reference Group
Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group
Cultural Ministers' Council Statistics Working Group
Data Mapping Pilot - Early Childhood Working Group and Project Board
Demography Statistics Advisory Group
Economic Statistics User Group
Education and Training Statistics Advisory Group
Family Statistics Advisory Group
General Social Survey Reference Group
Health Statistics Advisory Group
Household Income and Expenditure Statistics User Advisory Group
Information and Communication Technology Statistics Reference Group
Innovation (incl R&D) Statistics Reference Group
Input-Output Statistics User Group
International Trade in Services User Group
Labour Statistics Advisory Group
Longitudinal Studies Advisory Group
Methodology Advisory Group
Migrant Statistics Reference Group
Migrant Statistics Advisory Group
Mining User Advisory Group
National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data
National Ageing Statistics Advisory Group
National Community Services Information Management Group
National Corrective Services Statistics Advisory Group
National Crime Statistics Advisory Group
National Criminal Courts Statistics Advisory Group
National Disability Information Management Group

National Health Information Standards & Statistics Committee
Population Estimates Technical Workshop
Population Health Information Development Group
Private Hospital Statistics User Group
Productivity Measurement Reference Group
Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group
Standard Business Reporting Taxonomy Approval Committee
Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport Research Group
State Accounts User Group
Statistical Clearing House User Group
Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
Structural Issues in the Workforce Sub-Committee, Workforce Profile Working Group (CDSMAC sub-committee)
Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers Advisory Group
Survey of Adult Competencies Reference Group
Survey of Education and Training Reference Group
Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing Reference Group
Time Use Survey Advisory Group
Transport Statistics Network

State Government Groups

Statistical Coordination and User Forum (New South Wales)
Victorian Statistical Advisory Forum
Queensland Statistical Table
Government Agencies Statistical Committee (South Australia)
State Statistical Forum (all states and territories)
Statistical Policy Committee and Economic (Western Australia)
Social Statistics Consultative Groups (Western Australia)
Statistical Policy Committee (Tasmania)
Tasmanian Statistical Advisory Committee
Northern Territory Statistical Liaison Committee