



Annual Report 2006–07

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS



Annual Report **2006–07**

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

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Access to guides to ABS services, and other selected documents, including a comprehensive range of ABS statistics, are available on the ABS website www.abs.gov.au

The 2006–07 ABS Annual Report is located at:

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Australian Statistician

The Hon Chris Pearce, MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer

In accordance with the provisions of subsection 24(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, I hereby submit to you, for presentation to the Parliament, this report on the operations of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the year ended 30 June 2007.

This report complies with subsection 63(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999*, which requires that I, as Agency Head, must give a report to the Agency Minister, for presentation to the Parliament.

The report is dated on the day I approved the finalised text for printing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Pink".

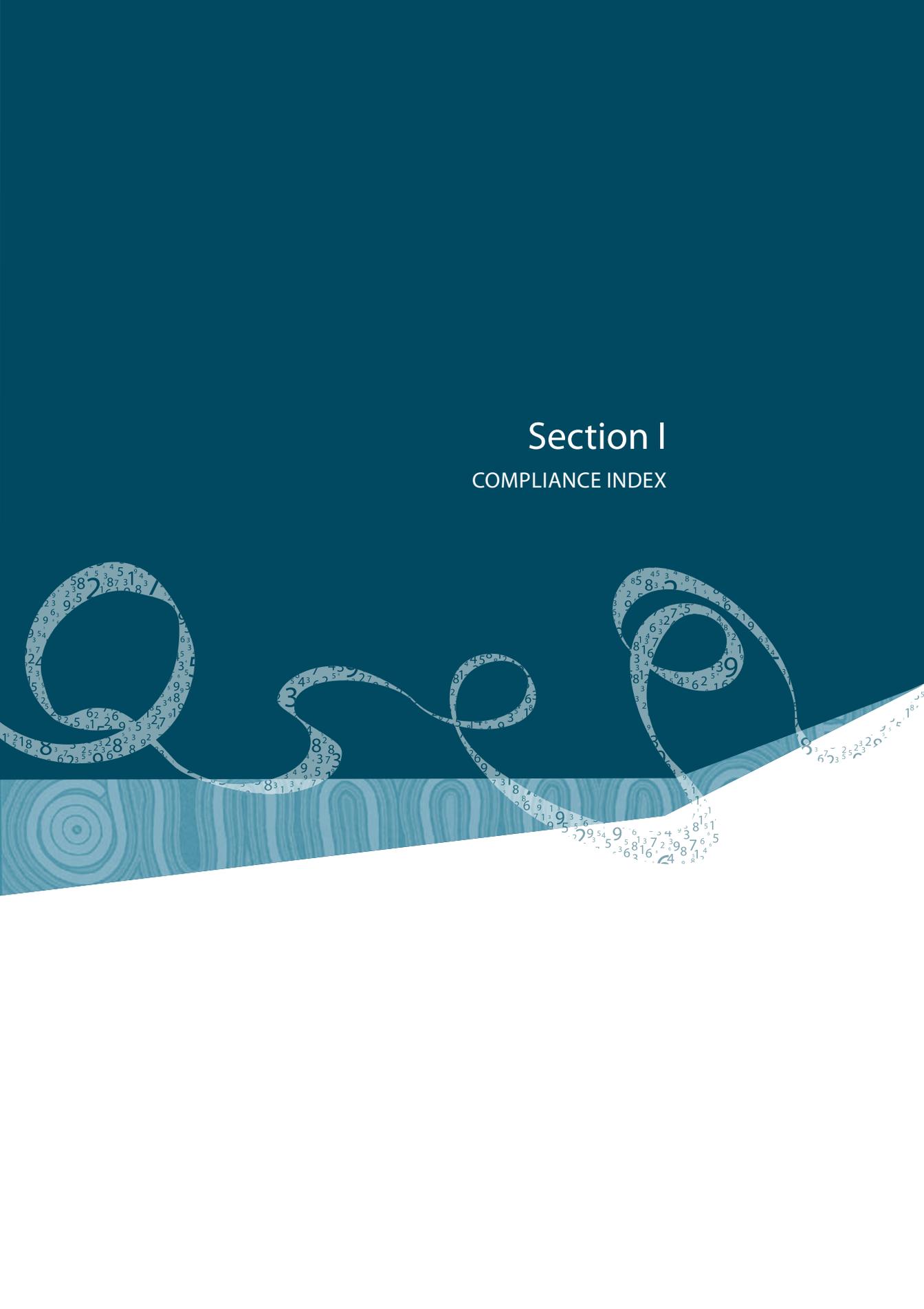
Brian Pink
Australian Statistician

// September 2007

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Section II
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

Australian Statistician's review of 2006–07



Australian Statistician, Brian Pink

In March 2007, I returned to the ABS after an absence of six years as New Zealand Government Statistician. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to lead the ABS, which is an organisation held in high esteem both here in Australia and in the international arena.

I would like to acknowledge my predecessor, Mr Dennis Trewin, who retired in January 2007 after a long and illustrious career at the ABS. Dennis and I worked closely together at the ABS and during our contemporaneous tenures as heads of official statistical organisations. Dennis' immense contribution to statistics, both in Australia and internationally, was recognised in the Queen's Birthday 2007 Honours List, when he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. This contribution to statistics did not end with his retirement as Australian Statistician, and Dennis has been active in the international statistical world in 2007. I draw your attention to the special article about Dennis in this report (see Chapter 6).

2006 Census of Population and Housing

The previous Statistician's review began with a message of thanks to the Australian public for their support for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. I would now like to add my own note of appreciation. The 2006 Census was successfully carried out by the ABS on 8 August 2006, and the first outputs from the census were released on 27 June 2007.



The Hon Peter Costello MP, Treasurer, with the Australian Statistician, Brian Pink, at the launch of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing results

The 2006 Census of Population and Housing was launched by the Treasurer, the Hon Peter Costello MP, on 24 July 2006, two weeks before Census night. In this period there was extensive promotion of the census in all forms of media, with Ernie Dingo urging people to complete their census forms. The Governor-General, together with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, the Hon Chris Pearce MP, visited the ABS on 3 August 2006 to show their support for the 2006 Census.

A major innovation for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing was the eCensus, which was the internet version of the census form. The eCensus was very well received, and nearly 10 per cent of the Australian public chose to complete their form by this means. The eCensus project has subsequently received two awards: a Laureate Gold Medal as part of the

Computerworld Honours Program, and an Excellence in e-Government Award. The e-Government Award, which was introduced in 2006 by the Australian Government, recognises and rewards the most outstanding project in e-government, based on the impact it has had on the lives of Australian citizens, the community and business.



ABS staff and the Hon Gary Nairn MP, at the CeBit Conference where the eCensus project was selected for the 2007 Excellence in e-Government Award



An ABS collector delivers a census form to the Governor-General at Government House

For the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, a number of strategies were implemented to ensure that all people in Australia would be enumerated, including strategies for people from different ethnic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people who were homeless on census night. The ABS worked closely with communities in the enumeration of the census to understand any issues and concerns, and to enable participation. These strategies were generally well received by those involved. The work in one area was also recognised when the ABS was selected as a recipient of the 2007 Participatory Process Award, presented by the Community Action Network. The award was in recognition of the ABS' activities associated with the enumeration of the homeless in inner-Brisbane for the 2006 Census.

Another aspect of the census process that received an award was the production of maps for the 2006 Census field operation. The ABS won first prize in the 2007 Map Competition conducted by the Spatial Sciences Institute, with the award announced at their Biennial International Conference, held in Hobart from 16–18 May. This project had several complex issues to overcome. This included developing a process to produce individual maps with well presented labels for areas ranging in scale from 1:1000 to 1:2 000 000. Due to the large number of maps and the short time frame, this process had to be completely automated. In addition, the logistics of producing, printing, collating, storing and validating 100 000 maps had to be developed and implemented. The award recognised the significant scale of the operation, and the approach developed to automate the process to achieve high quality maps to support census collectors.

The release of the census results on 27 June was a highlight of 2007, as they provide a wealth of information about Australia for use by governments and the community. The Treasurer launched the 2006 Census results at the Data Processing Centre in Melbourne, the site where the immense task of processing 7 206 183 census paper forms took place. Coverage of the census results by the media was extensive, and covered a range of information, from where we live, our age and how much we are paid.

For the first time, the release of census results was primarily via the internet rather than paper publications. This provided immediate access to the results. On the day the census data were released, the site recorded 1 693 476 hits between 9.30 am (the release time) and 12.30 pm. The rate was 9408 hits per minute.

Work has already commenced on reviewing the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and planning for the 2011 Census. The public consultation phase for the 2011 Census commences with the release of the *Information Paper: Census of Population and Housing, ABS Views on Content and Procedures, 2011*, in October 2007. Information sessions will be held in each capital city and selected major regional centres. Submissions will then be invited from the public, with submissions closing in March 2008. I encourage Australians to get involved in these consultations and assist the ABS to ask the questions that need to be answered.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people involved in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. While every Australian contributes to the census by completing their form, it is the ABS staff and, in particular, the 30 000 census collectors, area and district managers, and data processing centre staff that ensure the census operations run as smoothly as they do. I was also very pleased that the leadership provided by Mr Paul Williams, the Assistant Statistician of the Census and Demography Branch, was formally recognised when he was awarded a Public Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday 2007 Honours List.

LOCAL COLLECTOR SETS RECORD

Melville resident, Margaret Stafford, has set a record as the longest-serving census collector in Western Australia (and possibly Australia).

Margaret has worked on every census since 1971, making the 2006 Census of Population and Housing her eighth.

Amazingly, she has worked as a collector in all but one census. That was in 1976.

'I actually enjoy being a collector more than a supervisor because it gets me out and about meeting people,' said Margaret.

'It's very social and you get some exercise at the same time.'

Other ABS activities in 2006–07

There have been many other statistical achievements for the ABS during 2006–07, with information released for a wide range of subjects, covering both ongoing, regular indicators, and less-frequent releases. In particular, I would like to highlight two achievements of note.

- ◆ The first results from the 2005–06 Agricultural Census were released on 17 May 2007. The Agricultural Census is the ABS' largest mail-out collection, and is the first Agricultural Census undertaken using the Australian Business Register. The coverage was increased from 130 000 to 155 000 live units, and a 91 per cent response rate was achieved. For more information see Chapter 4 Economic Statistics Program.

- ◆ The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) was released in September 2006 and was used for the 2006 Census, the Monthly Population Survey, and other relevant ABS collections. For more information see Chapter 8 Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations.

As a result of an increased emphasis on the area of environment policy during 2006–07, the ABS has been involved in creating greater momentum to improve Australia’s system of environment statistics. My predecessor, Mr Trewin, was a member of the Australian State of the Environment Committee. Its five-yearly report was released by the Minister on 6 December 2006. Among other things, the report was critical about the lack of statistical information to support environmental decision making.

I am pleased that the ABS has had involvement with the Australian Government’s environment and climate change initiatives, including discussions about the streamlining of energy and greenhouse gas reporting.

While the ABS issued several significant publications in 2006–07, including *Water Account, Australia 2004–05* (cat. no. 4610.0) and *Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4624.0), there is a great deal more to be done to produce a significant environment dataset that meets the needs of all key users. In 2007–08, the ABS will continue to engage with users to understand their needs for environmental statistics and to seek opportunities to expand the ABS environmental statistics program.

While the release of the 2006 Census output on the ABS website marked a significant milestone in the way the ABS communicates information, developments are continuing in an attempt to optimise communication to all levels across government, the business sector and the community. The ABS’ goal is to increase the use of statistics and to improve understanding of the content, caveats, contexts and limitations of the data, to assist user assessment of fitness for purpose of the data. To achieve this we are working to provide more relevant, understandable and interesting content. We are also working on effective presentation of information on the website by utilising opportunities available from web technology.

The introduction of free statistics on the website has ensured that use of the ABS website continues to grow. This growth is an indication that more Australians are using statistics as the basis for decision making across all sectors. The ABS has continued the transition away from print media and we are now releasing some statistics exclusively on the ABS website, making effective use of the internet medium and the features available.

The success of the work on using the website for dissemination of information gained international recognition in 2006–07. A recent survey of more than 700 international economists by the Parisian International Chamber of Commerce and Ifo Institute, which is an economic research centre attached to the University of Munich, concluded that the ABS

website is the second best national statistical organisation (NSO) website. Statistics Slovenia came in first of the sixty-five NSOs and the ABS tied with Statistics Norway for second place, with Denmark and Finland also rating highly.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the 1967 referendum, at which 90 per cent of Australians voted to give the Australian Government the power to legislate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to include all Indigenous Australians in official estimates of the Australian population. I am pleased to report that the ABS is marking this fortieth anniversary by recognising the collective responsibility for reconciliation and developing a Reconciliation Action Plan. Many Australian organisations are developing such plans, and in so doing are committing to actions to achieve reconciliation in Australia. The plans form part of a National Program of Action, with the overarching goal of closing the seventeen-year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia. It will commit the ABS to actions to advance reconciliation over the coming decade in a number of areas, including recruitment and retention, statistical literacy, access to statistics and improved engagement, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statistics program, and cultural awareness and recognition.

Following my report, you will find an update on the ABS' work to improve statistics about Indigenous Australians. This has been an important part of the ABS' Population and Social Statistics Program, and important advances have been made, including the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy, to improve the quality of census collection and the development of Indigenous population estimates and projections.

There has been considerable interest in comparing measures and indicators for communities, including the ABS publication *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0), measures against various state plans, and measures for particular regions. The ABS has been working with those interested in producing sets of indicators, and also hosted a Community Indicator Workshop in Melbourne in September 2006. The aim of the workshop was to share Australian and international experiences in the development of progress measures, community and wellbeing indicators, and to clarify future development of this activity within Australia. Presentations were provided by international representatives from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; the Newfoundland and Labrador Province of Canada; by various academics; representatives of Australian and state government agencies; and the ABS. Outcomes will include further input to regional, national and international developments in this field of statistical work, as well as consideration of the ABS leadership role in these developments.

International involvement

Maintaining strong international relationships is a priority for the ABS and I will be continuing to involve the ABS in key international activities, such as setting standards and improving comparability. The ABS has been active in a number of initiatives, including the update of the System of National Account and the International Comparison Program. The ABS is also involved in providing technical assistance through a number of programs, including programs with Indonesia and Vanuatu, and assistance in project management through the Pacific Governance Support Program. For more information see Chapter 16 International engagement.

In addition to the international activities explained above, bilateral discussions were held between the ABS and Statistics New Zealand (SNZ) in October 2006. These discussions were very productive, covering topics such as data integration, strategies for the 2011 censuses, microdata access, human capital and emerging areas of statistics. The ABS and SNZ hold bilateral discussions every two years.

Organisation

In line with all Australian organisations, developing a capable workforce continues to be a high priority for the ABS. A great deal of work has been done to promote the ABS as the good place to work that it is. I am particularly pleased to say the ABS has had encouraging success with its revitalised graduate recruitment program. This year's campaign saw a 50 per cent increase in the number of applicants applying to the ABS Graduate Program, in spite of the competitive market.

The ABS has always invested in learning and development for its staff. I have been delighted to see the advances the ABS has made during 2006–07 to match these education programs to the needs of individuals. Using a capability framework, which has been customised to reflect the ABS work environment, staff can complete a self-assessment and work with their managers to prepare a customised learning and development plan.

The ABS also uses other opportunities to assist staff to develop the skills they need in their work. One of these programs was recognised with an award in 2006–07, with the ABS Library awarded the Australian Government Libraries Information Network Innovation Award 2006. The award was for the Library's Research Skills Training Program, delivered to ABS officers Australia-wide.

As part of developing a work environment that encourages productivity, the ABS' organisation-wide Respect Strategy is being implemented. An important part of the strategy is the ABS Respect Charter, which has been developed following an extensive consultation process with staff. The aim of this charter is to promote a workplace environment where everyone is treated with respect, fairness and dignity. It outlines the responsibilities of staff members, managers, and the people management areas of the ABS, to achieve this aim. Through facilitated open discussion about what constitutes a respectful environment, the ABS is making it clear that behaviours such as bullying and harassment are unacceptable, and ensuring that all employees understand what avenues exist to support them.

The ABS is looking to the future as well as the present, when considering its specialist workforce needs. The ABS continues to support the development of statistical literacy in Australia. The Young Statisticians Conference was held in April 2007, and was considered a success. The majority of people who attended the conference were aged 20–30 years. The Australian Research Council has approved funding for three years for a longitudinal study on the teaching of statistics in schools. As a partner in this project, the ABS will provide support by a combination of cash and in-kind contributions. This project will throw light on the effectiveness of ABS lesson plans and teaching materials from the CensusAtSchool project to improve statistical literacy.

The way forward for the ABS

During my first months back at the ABS, I have been considering ways to help the organisation focus more effectively on achieving its goals. Following extensive consultation and careful consideration, I announced a restructure of the organisation, which commenced on 2 July 2007. A great deal of work was put into bringing about this change and I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the many ABS officers who have implemented this strategy in a very short time frame.

The key drivers for the reorganisation included my desire to:

- ◆ ensure a strong focus on National Statistical Service (NSS) work at the most senior levels over the next few years
- ◆ look for opportunities to leverage administrative data, particularly around the labour statistics program
- ◆ create a separate additional subject matter division, with a strong emphasis on regionally related statistics and spatial data initiatives
- ◆ bring most public facing functions under one management structure and look for synergies in workforce use, business processes and supporting systems, and
- ◆ establish a strong standards based division with both internal and external focuses.

The changes to the ABS' organisational structure are designed to provide new opportunities for senior managers to pursue the highest priority strategic objectives. As I mentioned, these objectives are associated with the NSS initiative, which aims to strengthen and further develop Australia's national statistical system, and reinforce the ABS' statistical leadership role in that system.

The ABS is positioning itself to take the NSS forward and to be prepared for the changing landscape, where there is even greater emphasis on evidence-based policy development. Key to delivering NSS outcomes is ongoing and active participation of ABS senior managers on an NSS Governing Board. The changes I have made to the ABS' internal structure are aimed at facilitating such involvement on the board, and providing more time for Deputy Statisticians to promote and support participation in the NSS across the national statistical system. The re-organisation will allow the deputies more time to focus on external priorities rather than internal priorities.

The new structure of the ABS can be found in the About Us section on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au).

Advancing the National Statistical Service

In recent years the ABS has worked to strengthen client engagement and improve responsiveness to their needs, to raise the profile of its externally focused activities, and to increase the informed use of statistics. These outcomes remain a priority for the future. My goals are that the ABS continues to build and maintain relationships with users and producers of statistics, ultimately to improve the strength and coherence of the national statistical system as a whole. I also want the ABS to be forward-looking, to identify through its

environmental scanning significant changes that may impact on what ABS clients require and how they use statistics. This information will be critical to enable us to develop detailed strategies and set internal work program priorities.

The ABS will continue to work with stakeholders to develop and support the NSS by jointly identifying and communicating information needs and by supporting agreed strategies to meet identified priorities. The ABS will work across the national statistical system to assist and support the identification, documentation and retention of the most important official statistical data as an enduring national resource, wherever the data may reside. In particular, this will involve building and strengthening relationships with the Australian Government and state and territory government departments and agencies, at a strategic level. I believe this work will progressively enable the creation of the foundation layer upon which the NSS can evolve.

Discussions on developing a statistical community has seen the audience broadened to include interested people with statistically-related roles in the Australian Government, state, territory and local governments, non-government organisations, and academic and business sectors. As a first step, a Community of Users and Producers of Statistics (CUPS) page has been added to the NSS website to provide a single entry point for those looking for information on the statistical community and the statistical profession. The website provides information on statistical training, conferences and seminars, careers and professional associations. As the community develops, interactive networking facilities may be added. Ongoing consultation will occur nationally, and at the state and territory level, to ensure that activities are well-targeted.

The National Data Network (NDN) Demonstration Phase concluded at the end of June 2007, with the project moving into a Pilot Phase during 2007–08. The first of the pilot initiatives to be undertaken during this phase will be the development of a Children and Youth Statistical Portal, which will demonstrate data services available via the NDN, and support the development of the related community of interest. The portal will be publicly accessible from September 2007 and will contain:

- ◆ a 'seed' catalogue of children and youth statistical information resources to which producer/custodian organisations and researchers will be encouraged to add, and
- ◆ a 'seed' set of issues as a basis for discussion by producers/custodians and researchers that constitute children and youth statistics community of interest.

This portal-based approach to improving the visibility and accessibility of statistical information resources on children and youth will be reviewed in June 2008. Negotiations are underway with a number of other communities of interest to undertake other pilot projects during the pilot phase.

Australian Statistics Advisory Council

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) is an important source of advice for me, as Statistician, and for the Minister.

In 2006–07 the council provided the ABS with advice in meeting a number of challenges across the broad range of the ABS work program, and in specific areas such as an expanded and improved national statistical service.

I am pleased to welcome the new council Chairperson, Mr Geoff Allen, who commenced his five-year term in March 2007. I would also like to thank the members of the council for their willingness to provide high-quality advice on the collection of official statistics.

In 2007 Professor Sandra Harding retired as ASAC Chairperson, and Dr Adam Graycar resigned from ASAC. I would like to thank both Sandra and Adam for their work on ASAC, and their significant contributions to statistics.

Conclusion

As I noted at the start of this review, 2006–07 was a significant year for the ABS, with the conduct and release of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and the 2006 Agricultural Census, as well as continuing production of high-quality statistics on a very wide range of topics. It is also a time when we are looking at new ways to engage with users and producers of statistics, to expand the national statistical service, and provide the information needed by researchers, planners and decision makers in Australia.

The ABS is part of the Treasury portfolio. Both the Treasurer, the Hon Peter Costello MP, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, the Hon Chris Pearce MP, have continued to support the ABS during 2006–07 by, most importantly, continuing to maintain ABS independence and keeping collection and analysis of official statistics at arm's length from the government. As Australian Statistician, this support is very important to me, and to the ABS, as we work to produce reliable statistics that meet the needs of all users.

The ABS is well placed to meet Australia's information needs, now and into the future. I am pleased to be coming into such a dynamic organisation, and look forward to working with the staff of the ABS to continue to advance the organisation in meeting the challenges before us.

Indigenous Australian statistics

Introduction

Sunday 27 May 2007 marked the fortieth anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, in which more than 90 per cent of Australians voted to give the Australian Government the power to legislate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to include all Indigenous Australians in official estimates of the Australian population.

In the forty years since the 1967 Referendum, there have been significant improvements in the range, quality and availability of statistics about Indigenous Australians. Working with other agencies, the ABS continues to increase the breadth and quality of Indigenous statistics and increase its commitment to expanding and improving the National Statistical Service by responding to the needs of the broader community.

History of the 1967 Referendum

After ten years of campaigning, the Australian Government agreed to hold a referendum in 1967. It is important to recognise the significance of the people's movement in making this historic change. Many people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, campaigned extensively, with the vision of achieving a real sense of citizenship for Aboriginal Australian people through the referendum.

A 'no' case was not formulated as part of the referendum campaign, as the majority of parliamentarians supported the amendments.

The original Australian Constitution made two references to Australia's Indigenous persons in Sections 51(xxvi) and 127:

51. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to:-

(xxvi) The people of any race, other than the aboriginal people in any State, for whom it is necessary to make special laws.

127. In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted.

The 1967 Referendum question asked of voters was:

Do you approve the proposed law for the alteration of the Constitution entitled 'An Act to alter the Constitution so as to omit certain words relating to the people of the Aboriginal race in any state so that Aboriginals are to be counted in reckoning the population'?

An overwhelming majority (90.8 per cent) voted YES to the change, the highest YES vote ever recorded in a federal referendum.

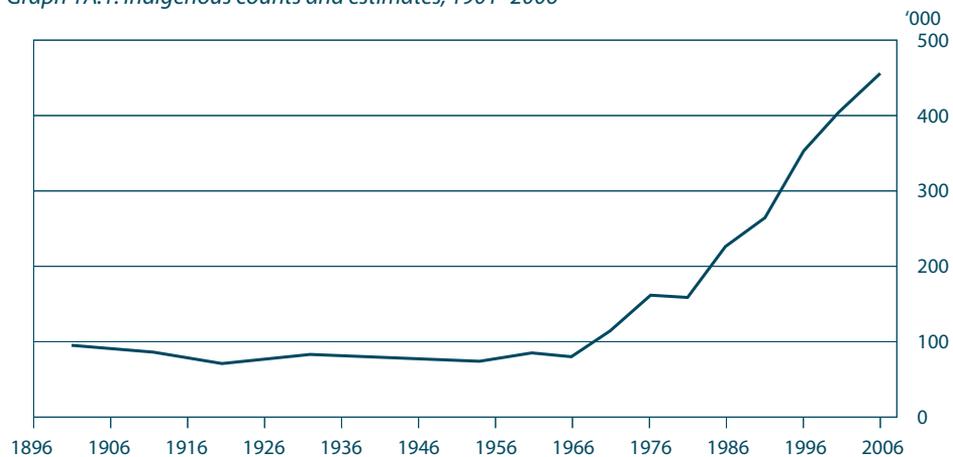
Source: The 1967 Referendum: Important Facts and Interesting Pieces of Information, Reconciliation Australia, 2007

Census history

There is a misconception that the first attempts to enumerate Indigenous Australians occurred as a result of the 1967 Referendum. In fact, a question on people's race has been asked in all Australian censuses since 1901. Information was collected but not used in official population figures if people reported being of 'more than 50 per cent Aboriginal blood'. However, prior to the 1966 Census, remote areas of Australia, largely uninhabited by non-Aboriginal Australian people, were not enumerated. During that time, estimates of Indigenous Australians were made by authorities responsible for native welfare.

Prior to the 1947 Census, Torres Strait Islanders were regarded as Aboriginal and treated in the same way as Aboriginal Australians. They were excluded from population figures if they were of 'more than 50 per cent Torres Strait Islander blood'. However, in the 1947 Census, Torres Strait Islanders were regarded as Polynesian and were included in official counts. In the 1954 and 1961 Censuses, they were regarded as Pacific Islanders and again included in official counts. For the 1966 Census, Torres Strait Islanders were once again classified as Aboriginal, and excluded from official figures. For further information on the history of the enumeration of Indigenous Australians in the census, see *Occasional Paper: Population Issues, Indigenous Australians, 1996* (cat. no. 4708.0).

Graph 1A.1: Indigenous counts and estimates, 1901–2006



Note: Censuses were held in 1901, 1911, 1921, 1933, 1947, 1954, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006. Pre-1966 figures are official estimates of the Indigenous population. Torres Strait Islanders are excluded from 1947 and 1966 figures.

Source: ABS Census data 1901–2006.

All censuses from 1986 onwards have been supported by a special Indigenous Enumeration Strategy, aimed at improving census awareness, forms design and field procedures, to facilitate the effective enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, particularly those living in remote areas.

The census count of Indigenous Australians increased from 116 000 to 455 000 between 1971 and 2006. After adjusting the census count for a number of factors, including people who were not counted in the census and those who did not state their Indigenous status, the Australian Indigenous population at 30 June 2006 was estimated to be 517 200 or 2.5 per cent of the total population. Among the Indigenous population, 463 900 or 90 per cent were estimated to be of Aboriginal origin only, 33 100 or 6 per cent were of Torres Strait Islander origin only and 20 200 or 4 per cent were of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

Table 1A.1: Indigenous census counts and Estimated Resident Population, 1971 and 2006

State / Territory	Census count		Estimated Resident Population(a)	
	1971	2006	2006	% of total Indigenous population
	'000	'000	'000	%
NSW	23.9	138.5	148.2	28.7
Vic	6.4	30.1	30.8	6.0
Qld	31.9	127.6	146.4	28.3
SA	7.3	25.6	26.0	5.0
WA	22.2	58.7	77.9	15.1
Tas	0.7	16.8	16.9	3.3
NT	23.4	53.7	66.6	12.9
ACT	0.3	3.9	4.0	0.8
Australia(b)	116.0	455.0	517.2	100.0

(a) Preliminary experimental estimates of the Indigenous population

(b) Includes Other Territories in 2006

Source: ABS census data 1971 and 2006; *Population Distribution, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians*, 2006 (cat. no. 4705.0)

Indigenous statistics

Since the early 1990s, the ABS has established a regular program of Indigenous statistical activity including:

- ◆ producing Indigenous population estimates and projections
- ◆ implementing the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy for censuses
- ◆ conducting a six-yearly National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and a six-yearly National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey. Both surveys are designed to produce national and state and territory level estimates, and cover remote and non-remote areas of Australia
- ◆ conducting other surveys commissioned by external agencies, such as the 1999, 2001 and 2006 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey

- ◆ publishing experimental Indigenous Australian labour force estimates from the Labour Force Survey
- ◆ releasing Indigenous Australian data in major ABS collections including schools, births, deaths and corrective services statistics
- ◆ working with other agencies to improve the quality of Indigenous Australian identification in administrative collections, known as the Indigenous Administrative Data Project, and
- ◆ contributing to understanding the social conditions of Indigenous Australian people through an ongoing analytical work program.

A major activity in 2006–07 was the establishment of a new Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (AGATSIS), which replaces a number of survey or project-specific advisory groups, to provide advice to the ABS on advancing its program of Indigenous statistics and setting future strategic directions. A number of Indigenous Australians are represented on AGATSIS. Other members include senior staff from the government and research sectors.

After reviewing the current policy context of Indigenous Australian affairs and consulting extensively with stakeholders, the issues paper entitled *ABS Directions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics* (cat. no. 4700.0) was released in June 2007. The following key strategic areas were identified to guide the new or enhanced statistical activity:

- ◆ engagement with Indigenous communities, policy makers, researchers and other users of Indigenous statistics
- ◆ understanding and measuring Indigenous wellbeing
- ◆ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth
- ◆ Indigenous engagement in economic activity
- ◆ improved reporting and analysis of comparisons over time, and
- ◆ regional data: improved capacity to support regional and small area analysis.

An important element of the work program is the Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy, the centrepiece of which is the recruitment of state and territory based Indigenous Engagement Managers (IEMs). With the support of the National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics and the state and territory regional offices, the IEMs:

- ◆ build and maintain networks with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations
- ◆ fulfil the role of State Indigenous Manager in the census and undertake a dissemination role, returning user-friendly information to communities and Indigenous organisations
- ◆ promote ABS products and services and provide training and advice to Indigenous communities and organisations on the use of statistics
- ◆ assist in the development of appropriate collection methodologies and contribute to the successful conduct of ABS Indigenous surveys (for example, IEMs are currently assisting in the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2008)
- ◆ support data analysis and validation processes with community level local knowledge, and
- ◆ provide a mentoring role for Indigenous Australian staff.

Working with Indigenous Australians

The ABS is also developing a Reconciliation Action Plan in 2007, to coincide with the fortieth anniversary of the 1967 Referendum. As part of its commitment to improving the quality of life and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians, the Reconciliation Action Plan will set out the specific actions that the ABS will take in the coming years to:

- ◆ improve its recruitment and retention of Indigenous Australians
- ◆ promote cultural awareness within the ABS and the wider community
- ◆ build statistical literacy among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ◆ increase the relevance and quality of statistical information relating to Indigenous Australians, and
- ◆ enhance its engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, to maximise the relevance and value of data collected and produced, and to encourage accurate interpretation of results.

In 2006–07, the ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Retention Plan 2007–2010 was also developed. This initiative is ongoing under the Workplace Diversity Program, and is closely linked to the objectives of the Reconciliation Action Plan.



Dan Black and Barbara Dunlop were instrumental in developing the ABS' Indigenous statistics work program. Both Dan and Barbara retired in 2007.

CHAPTER 2

Overview of the ABS

Introduction

The ABS is Australia's official national statistical agency. It was established as the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. The agency became the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1975 with the passing of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*. This Act also established the role of the Australian Statistician, and defined the functions of the ABS.

The role of the ABS

The ABS provides statistics on a wide range of economic, social, and, more recently, environmental matters, covering government, business and the community. It also has an important coordination function with respect to the statistical activities of other official bodies, both in Australia and overseas.

THE MISSION OF THE ABS

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.

The ABS Corporate Plan was released in December 2005, and can be found on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au). The plan outlines the strategies the ABS is using to achieve its mission, and sets out the direction for the ABS to meet future challenges.

Authority and legislation

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* provides the Statistician with the authority to conduct statistical collections and, when necessary, to direct a person or an organisation to provide statistical information. The Act imposes obligations on the ABS to publish and disseminate compilations and analyses of statistical information, and to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act.

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* sets out the functions and responsibilities of the Statistician and the ABS. As noted in the Australian Statistician's review, the ABS has committed to building its coordination role as set down in 6(c) of the Act (see next page).

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ABS ARE:

- (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 utilisation, 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.

Section 6 of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* also established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC).

Under the *Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act 1956*, Australian and state government statistical services have been integrated since 1958 (from 1924 for Tasmania). Although not covered by legislation, similar arrangements apply in both territories.

There were no amendments made to the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* or the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* during 2006–07.

Organisational structure

The ABS is led by the Australian Statistician—a statutory office established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*. The Statistician completed a review of the ABS' structure during the first half of 2007, with the new structure in place from 2 July 2007. For more information on the review see Chapter 1 Australian Statistician's review of 2006–07.

During 2006–07, the statistical operations of the ABS were divided into two groups: Economic Statistics Group and Population Statistics Group. Each group was headed by a Deputy Australian Statistician, with the support of a First Assistant Statistician leading the Economic Surveys and Integration Division for the Economic Statistics Group, and another leading the Social and Labour Statistics Division for the Population Statistics Group.

A third Deputy Australian Statistician has been leading the Services Group, with responsibility for meeting the ABS' other business objectives. This group has had First Assistant Statisticians leading the Technology Services and Corporate Services Divisions.

The Methodology and the Information Management and Census Divisions reported directly to the Australian Statistician.

The Office of the Statistician is responsible for key corporate functions, which support the Australian Statistician's administrative and statistical roles.

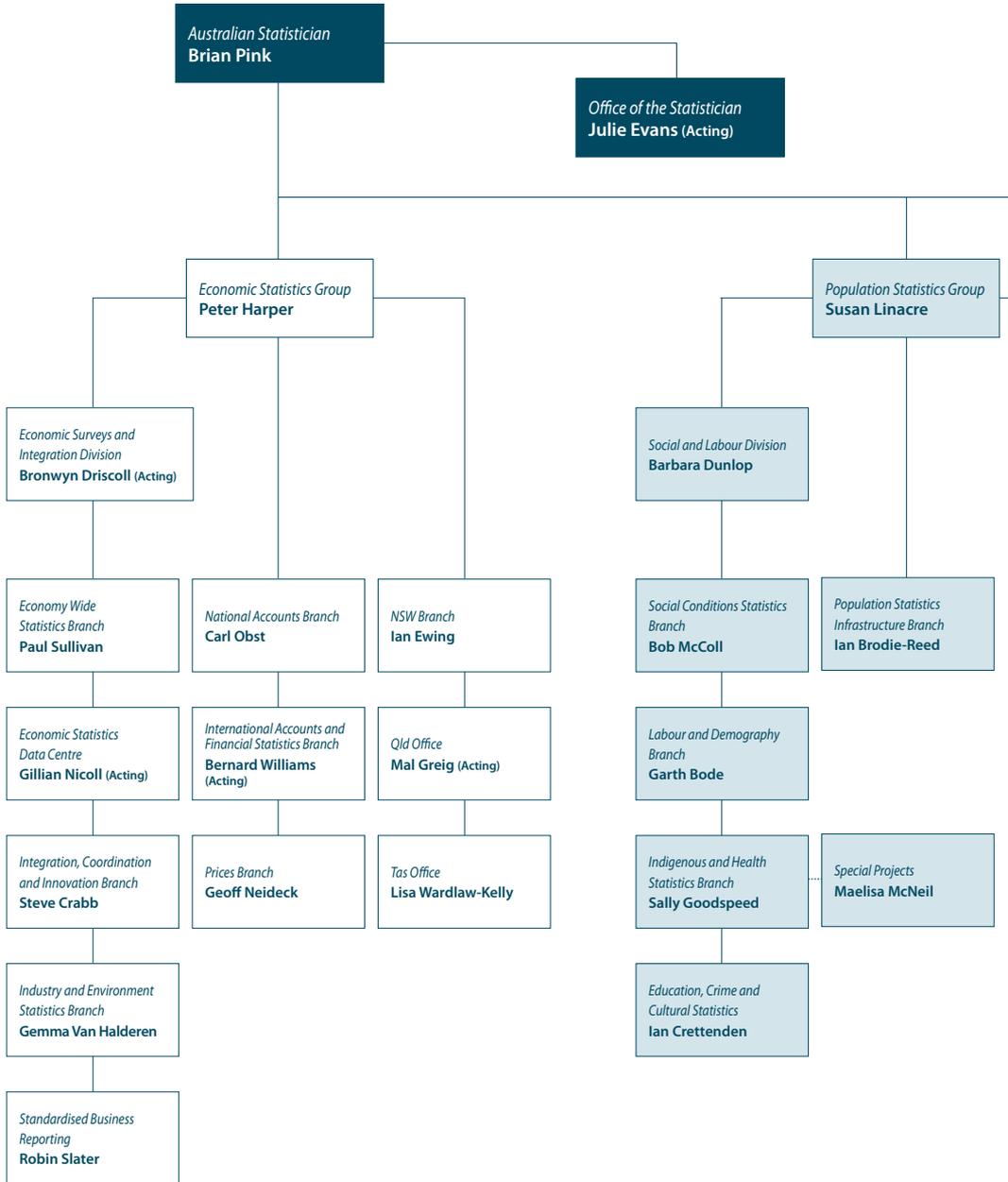
The ABS has a central office in Canberra and regional offices located in the eight state and territory capitals.

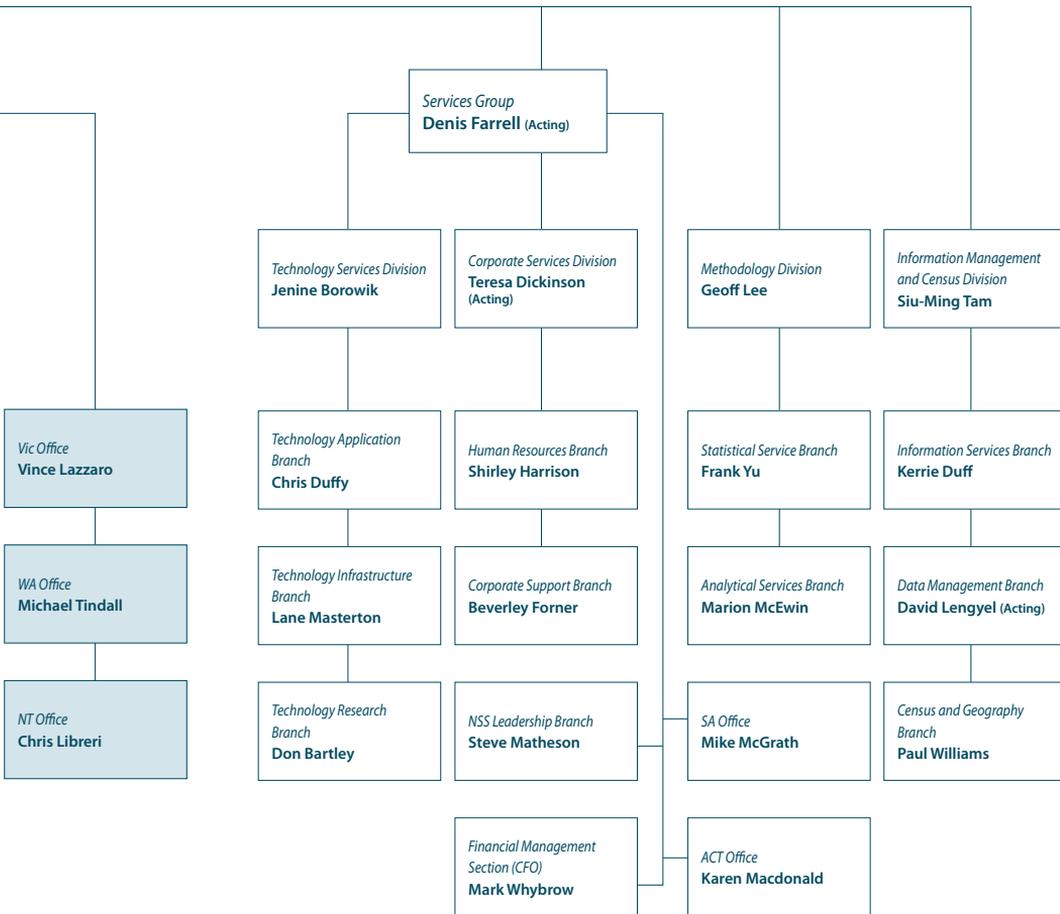
All regional offices, apart from the ACT office, have some responsibilities for national statistical activities. Regional offices are also primarily responsible for the delivery of statistical services to their state or territory. These offices have ongoing engagement with state and territory governments on statistical services and priorities through state and territory committees set up for that purpose and other consultation processes. In Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, the Regional Director administering the ABS regional office is also the State Government Statistician.

All Regional Directors have a direct reporting line to a Deputy Australian Statistician (see organisational chart on the following page for more detail).

Organisational Chart

(as at 30 June 2007)







The Hon Chris Pearce MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, with the Australian Statistician, Brian Pink, and participants at the Australian Statistics Advisory Council meeting on 5 June 2007.

Australian Statistics Advisory Council

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) was established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* to be the key advisory body to the Minister and the Statistician on statistical services. It provides valuable input to the directions and priorities of the ABS work program and reports annually to Parliament. ASAC meets twice each year.

The functions of ASAC, as set out in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, 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.

The chairperson of ASAC is Mr Geoff Allen, Director, The Allen Consulting Group. Mr Allen commenced his term as chairperson on 1 March 2007. The previous chairperson, Professor Sandra Harding, completed her five-year term on 28 February 2007.

The mission of the Australian Statistical Advisory Council is:

To ensure that, in keeping with Council's statutory charter, the advice furnished to the Minister and the Statistician in relation to the collection and dissemination of statistics has due regard to relative priorities, is objective, relevant, timely, constructive and practical, and that it is sensitive to the needs of both suppliers and users of statistical data.

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.

Further information on ASAC can be found on their website (www.asac.gov.au) or by contacting the ASAC Secretariat (ABS, Locked Bag 10, Belconnen, ACT, 2616 or 02 6252 7809). The council's annual report can also be found on their website.



*The Hon Chris Pearce MP,
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer*

Responsible minister

The ABS is an agency under the Treasury portfolio. The minister with portfolio responsibility for the Australian Bureau of Statistics is the Hon Chris Pearce MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer.

Outcome and outputs structure

ABS Outcomes

In the Portfolio Budget Statement 2006–07, the ABS has one outcome:

Informed decision making, research and discussion within governments and the community based on the provision of a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service.

This outcome is consistent with the mission of the ABS, as described in the ABS Corporate Plan.

ABS Outputs

Within the context of the Portfolio Budget Statements, Output 1.1—Australian Bureau of Statistics—national statistical service, produces and disseminates statistics in two key areas to meet the above outcome, namely:

The ABS achieves its outcome by the provision of two products and services:

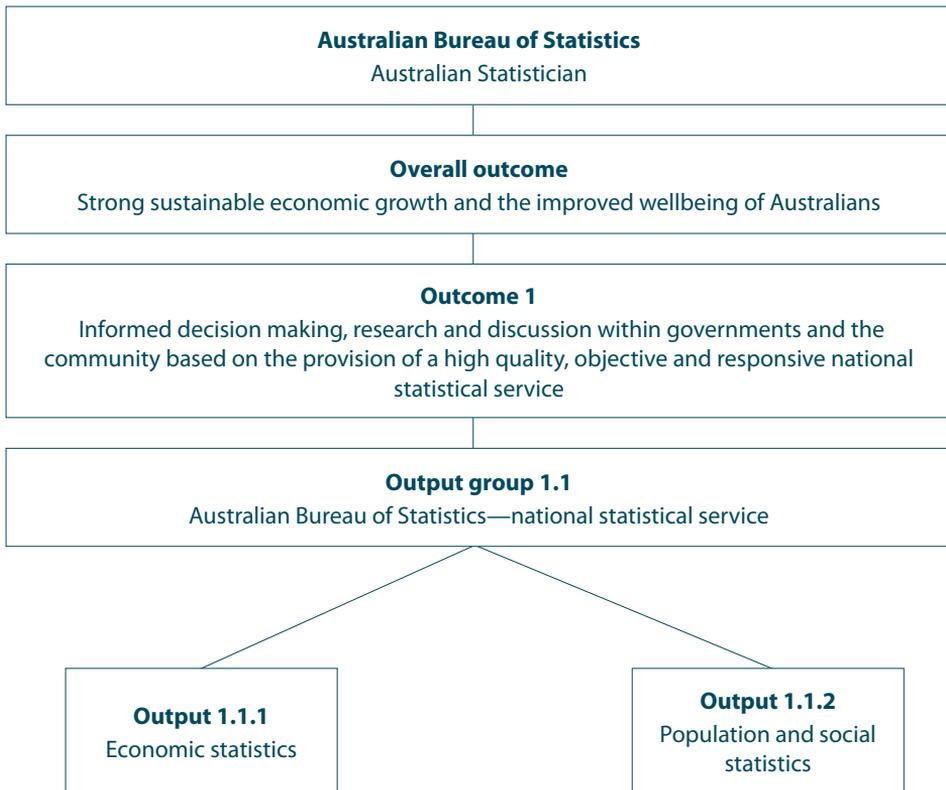
- ◆ Output 1.1.1—Economic Statistics, and
- ◆ Output 1.1.2—Population and Social Statistics.

Economic statistics are produced predominantly from the ABS business survey program. The economic statistics output contains an extensive range of statistical outputs relating to the structure and performance of the Australian economy.

Population and social statistics are produced mainly through the ABS household survey program. The population and social statistics output contains statistical information relating to the Australian population, including census and demographic statistics, as well as information relating to the social and economic wellbeing of the population.

Both outputs provide an objective source of information that is used by governments and the community to inform their decisions.

OUTCOMES AND OUTPUT GROUPS



The ABS statistical programs are supported by service areas that deliver assistance and advice on statistical methods, data and metadata management, information technology, client management, dissemination, human resources and other corporate services. Both areas of statistics involve extensive data collection through censuses, surveys and from administrative data sources.

Financial position

As already noted, within the context of the Portfolio Budget Statements, the ABS has two outputs: Economic Statistics, and Population and Social Statistics. Table 2.1 provides, for 2006–07, a financial summary of ABS outputs and prices of outputs against the budgeted figures, and also provides budgeted figures for 2007–08. The full financial statements are provided in Chapter 24. The ABS budget is prepared under an accrual framework, consistent with the Australian Government Budget requirements.

The operating surplus of \$0.6 million in 2006–07 was \$2.1 million higher than the \$1.5 million deficit projected at Additional Estimates. The improved position is primarily due to a technical accounting adjustment to employee benefits associated with movements in long-term interest rates. If the favourable movement in the interest rate had not taken place, the ABS would have recorded a loss in 2006–07. Revenue from other sources was \$2.3 million higher

than budget, due to increased consultants work associated with the 2006 Census. Increases in other gains of \$0.1 million were also achieved on minor asset disposals. Expenditure was \$0.3 million higher than budget due to increased costs associated with higher levels of external service provision that were offset by a technical movement in employee benefits.

Table 2.1 Financial resources summary (\$'000)

	Budget 2006–07 (a)	Actual 2006–07	Variance	Budget 2007–08 (b)
Price of Departmental Outputs				
Output group 1.1—National Statistical Service				
Output group 1.1.1—Economic statistics	140 843	142 886	(2 043)	150 414
Output group 1.1.2—Population and social statistics	296 455	294 709	1 746	169 863
Total output	437 298	437 595	(297)	320 277
Revenue from Government appropriation	414 431	414 431	-	299 094
Revenue from other sources	21 225	23 501	2 276	21 083
Total Price of Outputs	435 656	437 932	2 276	320 177
Total for Outcome 1	435 656	437 932	2 276	320 177

(a) Budget 2006-07—full year budget, including additional estimates.

(b) Budget 2007-08—budget prior to additional estimates.

The ABS does not administer any discretionary grants. It conducts a scholarship program in conjunction with four Australian universities.

The breakdown of revenue raised from other sources is shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Revenue raised from other sources (\$'000)

	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Revenue raised from statistics			
Publications	776	270	175
Other standard products	4 293	1 781	843
Information consultancy	4 814	4 491	4 805
Statistical consultancy	784	1 207	2 698
User funded surveys	4 465	8 159	9 453
Other products and services	4 100	3 693	4 852
<i>Total revenue raised from statistics</i>	<i>19 232</i>	<i>19 600</i>	<i>22 826</i>
Other revenue	1 587	617	675
Total	20 819	20 217	23 501

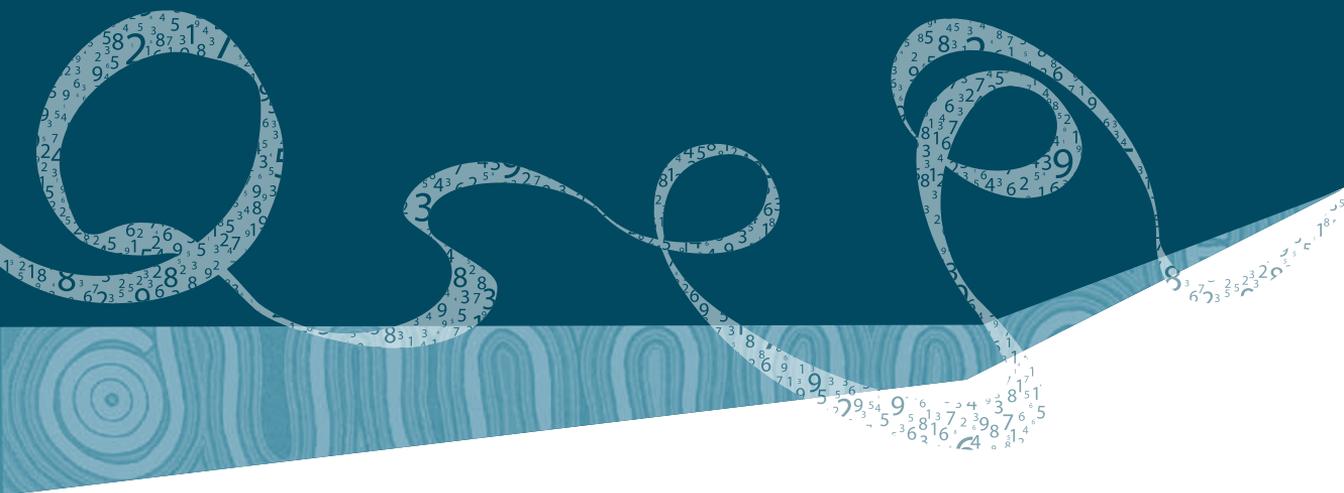
Total revenue increased in 2006–07 compared to 2005–06, with a 16 per cent increase in revenue raised from statistics. Other revenue increased by a similar margin of 9 per cent over the previous year, but was markedly less than 2004–05, when the one-off International Statistical Institute conference was hosted by the ABS.

Increases in revenue were recorded against statistical consultancy (124 per cent), other products and services (31 per cent) and user-funded surveys (16 per cent), building on the gains from the previous year and reflecting the ABS' continued commitment to increasing its engagement with statistical users.

The ABS continued to record declines in revenue from publications (35 per cent decline) and other standard products (53 per cent decline). This was the first full year following the Australian Government decision to provide free access to all publications and other statistical products on the ABS website and the cessation, as a result, of the subscription service for hardcopy publications.

Section III

NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM



CHAPTER 3

ABS and the national statistical service

Introduction

The ABS has responsibility for providing an effective national statistical service. The ABS' enabling legislation, the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, establishes the ABS as Australia's central statistical authority, responsible for providing statistical services to all Australian governments, and the community. The functions described in the legislation provide for the ABS to collect, compile, analyse, and disseminate statistics, and to work with other organisations on statistical activities.

The role of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) is changing in many countries, including Australia. While statistical production responsibilities remain the highest priority for NSOs like the ABS, they are increasingly taking on a statistical leadership role as well. This is occurring for a number of reasons, including the need for greater coordination of statistical products, with another driving force being increased use by NSOs and other government agencies of their administrative and transactional databases for statistical purposes. In Australia, these government agencies are often best placed to produce statistics from these databases as long as they have appropriately skilled staff.

Where other agencies do not have staff with appropriate skills, NSOs are being asked to take a statistical leadership role and assist with improving coordination of the collection, as well as compilation and dissemination of the statistics. In Australia, for example, the ABS continues to broaden the concept of its statistical role to include not only statistics collected by the ABS, but also data produced by, or available from, other government and non-government agencies.

Technology advances and national statistics

The emergence of communication networks, such as the internet, has allowed for the development of more sophisticated approaches to the electronic transfer of information, and the development of business processes that span multiple organisations. Governments, regulatory authorities, peak industry groups and businesses are investing in architecture frameworks that are designed to support business processes that cross organisational boundaries.

The adoption of technology is being driven by the need for 'anywhere, anytime, in a way that suits me' access to information, for example:

- ◆ people are changing the way they contribute information and use statistics, and
- ◆ individuals and organisations are increasing their involvement in managing, providing and/or consuming statistical information, driven by the growing demand for data to inform policy debates, and by changes in the way society uses technology to communicate and collaborate.

The ability to use the internet to easily search, discover and collaborate is driving innovation, resulting in the availability of many new tools and changes in the production model for the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistics.

NSOs and other producers of quality statistics need to consider how to respond to these changes. NSOs have limited resources and are facing increasing challenges in prioritising investments and maximising outcomes, particularly given the explosion in technology use and opportunity, the cost and complexity of technology, and shortages of skills.

The National Data Network

One of the initiatives the ABS is using to meet the increased demand for information is the development of the National Data Network (NDN). The NDN provides a library of statistical data holdings of relevance to policy analysis and research. Data custodians will be able to access a range of web-based services, protocols, procedures and tools to assist them to efficiently manage and share data, in a way that ensures security and privacy.

The NDN provides a practical vehicle for organisations with strong capabilities in statistics to provide leadership and assistance to others by supporting technology and protocols, and thereby supporting national (and potentially international) statistical leadership goals. Organisations can contribute in areas in which they have strong capabilities, and benefit from other participants in areas in which they have less capability or limited capacity. For example, some participants may be well-placed to support the development of the NDN by contributing sound data and metadata standards. Other participants may then be able to contribute data and metadata conforming to these standards. Some NDN participants may have specific expertise or a tool that they would like to see used widely, while many participants may simply utilise the resources of the NDN, without making specific contributions.

The NDN is one example of producers and users of statistics in Australia collaborating to meet the challenges arising from increasing demand for information and the rapid evolution of technology use. The collaborative approach harnesses and shares the work of the participants to build Australia's national statistics system more effectively than individual efforts. The design and the use of open source software and approaches (much of which exists already) provides a means to join disparate components into a functional network. The federated nature of the technology development mirrors and draws on the federated nature of the evolving business process. As a result, data custodians can make data held within their organisations more accessible to researchers and analysts. More information about the NDN can be found in Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics.



The ABS is the lead agency in developing the National Data Network (NDN). The NDN provides infrastructure, protocols, standards, and services to support the sharing and integration of data across Australia. It has been developed to increase the availability, accessibility, and usability of information sources relevant to policy analysis and research, particularly key administrative and survey datasets held by state and territory and Australian Government agencies.

The NDN moves to pilot phase for 2007–08 to demonstrate functionality and to progress collaborative developments. The Children and Youth Statistical Portal is the first pilot project underway. The portal will provide:

- ◆ pathways to statistical data and reports
- ◆ facilities to search for other information resources, and
- ◆ discussion forums.

Further information is available at the NDN website (www.nationaldatanetwork.org).

National Statistical Service

As well as the NDN, the ABS has been advancing its statistical leadership role by building and strengthening collaborative arrangements with other agencies.

Some of the main achievements of the ABS' National Statistical Service (NSS) are:

- ◆ supporting the Australian Government Statistical Forum and forums in each state and territory, to share information on better statistical practice, and to establish overall state and territory statistical priorities
- ◆ providing outposted statistical officers to assist a range of Australian Government, and state and territory governments and agencies. Outposted officers facilitate the access to, and understanding of, statistics, and strengthen statistical coordination across host agencies. Some outposted officers complete specific project work to assist the host agency
- ◆ conducting an external training program through the National Statistical Training Institute to improve the statistical skills of staff in government agencies and providing training for users of ABS statistics

- ◆ building a statistical community—the ABS is taking a leading role in developing a Community of Users and Producers of Statistics (CUPS). As a first step, a CUPS page has been added to the NSS website to provide a single entry point for those looking for information on the statistical community and the statistical profession. The website provides information on statistical training, conferences and seminars, careers and professional associations, and
- ◆ developing a range of stronger collaborative relationships with other agencies.

The **national statistical system** consists of the organisations and arrangements, formal and informal, which together provide statistics.

Australia's **national statistical service** is the range of statistical services that are collectively provided for Australia.

The ABS has a **National Statistical Service** branch.

More information about the NSS can be found in Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics.

CHAPTER 4

Economic Statistics Program

Introduction

The Economic Statistics Program provides a range of statistics that are used by governments, businesses and community groups to: formulate and assess economic policies (at both macro and micro level); evaluate economic performance; understand the drivers of economic growth; and understand the structure of, and the emerging trends in, the Australian economy. State, territory and regional dimensions of these issues are important, and emphasis is given to servicing these statistical needs. The ABS plays an active role in the international comparability of economic statistics.

In addition, the Economic Statistics Program provides a range of environment and energy statistics, and also provides a focal point for the ABS to meet the growing need for information in this area. These data directly assist in the management of the nation's environmental and natural resources. Regional dimensions of the data are of particular importance and the ABS has invested in methods aimed at improving regional environmental data.

A complete list of the areas within the Economic Statistics Program is included at the end of this chapter.

The ABS framework for economic statistics is based on the United Nations System of National Accounts 1993 (SNA). The SNA provides a comprehensive framework for compiling economic data in a coherent and consistent manner for the purposes of economic analysis, and the compilation of national accounts in particular. A range of other connected international standards is also used including the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM), the standards on Government Finance Statistics, manuals on Consumer and Producer Price Indexes, and Research and Development Expenditure.

For environmental statistics, the ABS is engaged in international collaboration on the implementation of a framework to support environment and energy statistics known as the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA). The SEEA is aligned with the SNA and will meet the needs of users for a coherent and consistent data system that allows for integrated environmental-economic analyses (for example, links of resource use and emissions to economic growth and distribution of income and wealth).

The main economic indicators released by the Economic Statistics Program are the quarterly national accounts (containing the latest estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) and household saving); the quarterly consumer, producer and house price indexes; the quarterly balance of payments; the quarterly wage price index; the quarterly business indicators publication; and the monthly retail trade publication. These sub-annual releases provide a comprehensive picture of Australia's economic performance and form the basis for economic commentary, analysis and policy development.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2004–05 a total of 10 085 gegalitres of water was used on crops and pastures, down 3.4 per cent on the previous year.

Source: *Water Use on Australian Farms, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4618.0)

A wide range of other statistics is also produced. The sub-annual statistics focus on more targeted areas of the economy such as capital expenditure, building activity, government finance statistics, housing finance and tourist accommodation. Annual publications provide more detailed structural information on the Australian economy, including areas such as innovation, and research and development.

Statistical developments in 2006–07

Enhanced statistical outputs

1. First release of Business Longitudinal Database data

A discussion paper: The first iteration of the Business Longitudinal Database (cat. no. 8164.0) was released in May 2007. The ABS is undertaking extensive consultation with users of the Business Longitudinal Database (BLD), confirming that the core purpose of the BLD is to provide insight into the activities that most influence business performance, and to provide insight into the capacity (either financial or in terms of characteristics) of businesses to undertake these activities. These findings will influence future iterations of the BLD.

2. Improvements to Australia's environment statistics system

Building on a number of ABS outputs in recent years, the third edition of *Water Account, Australia 2004–05* (cat. no. 4610.0) was released on November 2006, which was six months ahead of schedule. It provided information on water use, which was used in the National Water Commission's *Australian Water Resources Assessment 2005*. The quality of the water account estimates continues to improve as experience and survey capacity increase.

The first issue of *Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4624.0) was released in July 2006, fourteen months after the decision to fund a biennial Natural Resource Management survey was announced. Final results from the Natural Resource Management Survey were released in October 2006, providing information at the federal, state and territory and regional level.

3. The 2005–06 Agricultural Census

The 2005–06 Agricultural Census was conducted successfully, based on an improved Australian Business Register framework. The preliminary estimates, released in May 2007, were of high quality. In addition, with the financial support of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Department of the Environment and Heritage (now known as the Department of Environment and Water Resources) and the National Water Commission, the Agricultural Census results have been coded to mesh blocks. The coding significantly improves the analytical value of the data, by supporting future release of results for flexible geographies.



Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Sussan Ley MP; Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, the Hon Chris Pearce MP; and previous Deputy Australian Statistician, Jonathon Palmer, at the launch of the Agricultural Census

4. Release of Input–Output tables for 2001–02

In July 2006, preliminary input–output tables for 2001–02 were released. Work on these tables was fast-tracked in response to a request from the Productivity Commission. The motivation for the request from the Commission was to enable modelling work to inform Council of Australian Government deliberations on a number of priority matters within the economic reform agenda. There are a number of notable aspects of these input–output tables. Most importantly, they provide the first comprehensive picture of the structure of the Australian economy since the introduction of the new tax system. The inclusion of a specific table recording the flows of the goods and services tax is an important addition to the suite of information available to analysts.

5. Enhanced price measures and documentation

Two additions to the suite of sources and methods documentation to support users of price statistics were released in 2006–07, with *Producer and International Trade Price Indexes: Concepts, Sources and Methods* (cat. no. 6429.0) released in August 2006 and *A Guide to the House Price Index* (cat. no. 6464.0) released in November 2006.

To address the issue of the lack of coverage of price change for service industries in the economy, the ABS has developed a methodology and an experimental price index for retail trade margins. *Information Paper: Experimental Price Index for Retail Trade Margins, Australia, 2003 to 2006* (cat. no. 6402.0), was published in February 2007. The ABS has developed strong relationships with the providers of the data, and high levels of support have been obtained from key clients interested in these statistics. In future, the ABS will integrate the retail trade margin price index with Producer Price Indexes and National Accounts, to enhance coverage for the services sector of the economy.

In April 2007, the ABS announced that it would commence publishing the Reserve Bank of Australia's measures of inflation, as an analytical series in the Consumer Price Index, Australia (cat. no. 6401.0), commencing with the June quarter 2007 issue.

6. Improved responsiveness through an annual integrated collection strategy for industry statistics

To improve the responsiveness and coverage of the ABS industry statistics program, a rolling, integrated collection strategy has been developed and implemented. This strategy has resulted in the ability to introduce an Energy Supply Survey in respect of 2007–08, through targeted reductions to the Manufacturing, Mining and Utilities collections. An Annual Integrated Collection complementary program will provide outputs, traditionally collected via the survey program, through data substitution using taxation data, data amalgamation or statistical estimation. Such complementary estimates will replace directly collected estimates for items rated as a medium to low priority by users, such as four-digit industry details for manufacturing.

7. Improved counts of businesses

In February 2007, improved estimates of business counts were released in *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exit* (cat. no. 8165.0). The scope, and thus the headline count of businesses, has been significantly reduced compared to former releases, with only businesses that are actively trading in goods or services included. The data is now more relevant to the needs of key users.

DID YOU KNOW?

There were 1 963 907 actively trading businesses in Australia in June 2006, up 1.3 per cent from the previous year.

Source: *Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, June 2003 to June 2006* (cat. no. 8165.0)

8. Venture Capital and Later Stage Private Equity Measurement

A venture capital survey has been conducted by the ABS for six years, and the outputs from these surveys have been well-received by users. However, a conceptual review of the survey was commenced in mid-2006 because recent increased interest in higher value later stage investments, which the framework used for the venture capital survey, did not sufficiently differentiate from the earlier and later stage investments. The findings of that review have been implemented in respect of the 2005–06 survey, including a change to the name of the survey and the collection of additional data items, ensuring that the published statistics remain fit for their purpose.

9. Revised tourism measures

The 2005–06 issue of the *Australian National Accounts, Tourism Satellite Account* (cat. no. 5249.0) was released in May 2007. It contains macroeconomic information on the tourism industry and particularly its share of industry value added and GDP for the Australian economy. Data are published back to 1997–98. As tourism is not an industry in the conventional sense (it is a classification by type of consumer rather than industry), an industry proxy has to be derived as a model based estimate. The current issue contains a review and re-benchmarking of the estimates to the balanced supply and use tables that underlie the national accounts industry estimates. As a result of this process a number of improvements to the data were introduced. This work receives user-funding from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources.

10. Analytical measures of taxation revenue

The 2005–06 issue of *Taxation Revenue, Australia* (cat. no. 5506.0) contained a feature article providing enhanced analytical measures of taxation revenue.

Improved statistical standards

The ABS regularly reviews the statistics it produces, to enhance the range or quality of the statistics, or to improve the standards, methods and ways in which the statistics are produced. In 2006–07 the Economic Statistics program undertook a number of projects to improve statistical standards. For example, revised standards for international trade statistics were introduced, and international statistical standards were enhanced. For more information on improved statistical standards see Chapter 15 Statistical standards and infrastructure.

Other statistical developments

Telstra was effectively privatised in November 2006. For statistical purposes, the ABS decided to treat Telstra as a private sector entity from the March quarter 2007. In February 2007, the ABS released *Information Paper: Treatment of Telstra in ABS Statistics* (cat. no. 8102.0), which outlined the treatment of Telstra in ABS statistics as a result of the privatisation.

The ABS has adopted a multidimensional view of the quality assessment of the National Accounts, with a focus on addressing the wider concept of quality or fitness for purpose. Core to this approach will be increasing the understanding of the National Accounts,

allowing users to make better-informed judgments on quality. The strategy will also draw on international comparisons, to ensure the Australian National Accounts continue to meet international best practice.

The hours worked indexes previously published in the annual and quarterly National Accounts releases used a methodology that resulted in the aggregate level of hours worked being upwardly biased. However, the movements from quarter to quarter and year to year were basically correct. The Labour Force Survey data underlying these indexes are amenable to the adoption of a more sophisticated methodology to improve hours worked estimates for the economy as a whole and for the market sector. The ABS has used the results of this improved method to compile hours worked indexes and the various productivity indexes published in the 2006 release of the *Australian System of National Accounts* (cat. no. 5204.0).

Table 4.1: Economic Statistics Program

National Accounts	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.
International Accounts	The International Accounts program provides statistics on Australia's balance of payments and international investment position, and periodic information on the activities of non-resident affiliates of Australian enterprises and Australian affiliates of non-resident enterprises.
International Trade	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.
Financial Statistics	The Financial Statistics program compiles statistics on the financial assets, liabilities, borrowing and lending of financial institutions, and on the stocks and flows of finance for the various sectors of the economy.
Public Sector Accounts	The Public Sector Accounts program provides government finance statistics 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 predominantly from administrative data sources.
Prices	The Prices program compiles the Consumer Price Index, the House Price Indexes, the Labour Price Index (which is an annual series comprising a quarterly Wage Price Index and an annual Non-wage Price Index), and a range of Producer and International Trade Price Indexes.
Business Indicators	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 retail and selected service industries; quarterly statistics of company profits, inventories, sales and labour costs; quarterly statistics of actual and expected new capital expenditure; and quarterly statistics of actual and expected mineral and petroleum exploration. These data are essential inputs into the compilation of quarterly and annual National Accounts and Input–Output tables.

Economy Wide Statistics	The Economy Wide Statistics program is responsible for the provision of annual statistics that measure changes in the operations, structure and performance of all private and public trading enterprises (with the exception of finance and insurance). These statistics are derived from an annual economic activity survey and business income tax data from the Australian Taxation Office.
Business Demographics	The Business Demographics program is responsible for the provision of a range of information about the structure, characteristics and performance of the economy and conceptual developments regarding business definitions and classifications. This information is part of a consistent framework for all ABS business statistics and includes the development of an Integrated Business Characteristics Strategy. A particular, but not exclusive, focus of the program is on providing information about small businesses.
Innovation and Technology	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, within Australia.
Agriculture	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, as well as the economic and environmental aspects of agricultural operations. The main collections include: an annual agricultural survey; a five-yearly agricultural census; and a range of monthly, quarterly and ad hoc surveys covering specific aspects of agriculture and related activity.
Mining	The Mining program provides annual data about the structure, performance and production of the mining, electricity, gas, water and sewerage industries, as well as quarterly data on private sector exploration for minerals and petroleum in Australia.
Manufacturing	The Manufacturing program provides statistics on the structure, financial operations, performance and production of the manufacturing industry.
Construction	The Construction program provides regular data on levels of activity in residential building, non-residential building and engineering construction. It also provides periodic statistics on the structure, performance and characteristics of the construction industry.
Transport	The Transport program provides statistics about transport-related activities, particularly relating to the composition and use of the road fleet in Australia. It also produces periodic statistics on the structure, performance and characteristics of the transport industry.
Service Industries	The Service Industries program provides detailed information about the operations, performance and structure of Australia's service industries, including the not-for-profit sector, through a comprehensive program of periodic collections and use of non-ABS collected data. Statistics are produced for particular industries and activities in the following sectors of the economy: retail, wholesale, accommodation and restaurants, transport, telecommunications, property and business services, health, community services, culture, recreation, and personal services.

Tourism	The Tourism program is responsible for producing regular, timely and coherent data on tourism activities. The data produced include: the Australian Tourism Satellite Account, overseas arrivals and departures, tourism-related exports and imports indicators, the Survey of Tourist Accommodation, and data collected under the Service Industries program.
Environment and Energy	The Environment and Energy program provides a focal point for the ABS to meet the growing need for environment and energy information by integrating environmental, economic and social data.

CHAPTER 5

Population and Social Statistics Program

Introduction

The Population and Social Statistics Program produces statistical information relating to the Australian population, for example census and demographic statistics. The program also presents information relating to the social and economic wellbeing of the nation. This information provides a picture of the ways people's lives are changing over time. There is also work focusing on different groups in the population. Population and social statistics are produced mainly through the ABS household survey program.

The ABS framework for social statistics, as published in *Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics* (cat. no. 4160.0), is built around two key dimensions. The first relates to a number of key areas of social concern:

- ◆ health
- ◆ family and community
- ◆ housing
- ◆ education and training
- ◆ work
- ◆ economic resources
- ◆ crime and justice
- ◆ culture and leisure, and
- ◆ population.

The second dimension focuses on population groups, which are of particular interest to the community and to governments for reasons such as their special need or disadvantage. These groups include:

- ◆ older people
- ◆ children
- ◆ youth
- ◆ families with children
- ◆ long-term unemployed
- ◆ lone parents
- ◆ people with disabilities
- ◆ carers
- ◆ recipients of various government benefits

- ◆ low income earners
- ◆ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ◆ migrants, and
- ◆ people whose language background is not English.

DID YOU KNOW?

A boy born in 2005 could expect to live to 78 (four years longer than a boy in 1995), while a girl could expect to reach 83 (three years longer than girl born in 1995).

Source: *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, 2007* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001).

Statistical developments in 2006–07

Statistics produced by the Population and Social Statistics Program include some regular series as well as a range of measures that are produced less frequently or on a periodic or one-off basis. The regular series include monthly labour force measures; quarterly population estimates; quarterly average weekly earnings figures; annual statistics on recorded crime, courts and prisoners; and annual births and causes of death statistics.

In 2006–07, results released from less frequent series included:

- ◆ 2003–04 Government Benefits, Taxes and Household Income
- ◆ 2005 Personal Safety Survey
- ◆ 2006 Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey
- ◆ 2006 Child Employment
- ◆ 2006 Labour Mobility
- ◆ 2006 Working Time Arrangements
- ◆ 2006 Work-Related Injuries
- ◆ 2006 Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia
- ◆ 2006 Pregnancy and Employment Transitions
- ◆ 2006 General Social Survey, and
- ◆ 2006 Census Post Enumeration Survey.

Other significant statistical developments during 2006–07 are outlined below:

1. Completion of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing

The 2006 Census of Population and Housing provides a wealth of social data that is used widely by individuals, community groups, businesses, researchers and governments. The census is the largest statistical collection undertaken in Australia, and one of the most important for the ABS. Its objective is to accurately measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on census night, which was 8 August 2006, and the dwellings in which they live. The data provide a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each of the states, territories and local government areas. The census also provides information about the characteristics of the Australian population and its housing within small geographic areas and for small population groups. The census provides statistical information to assist decision making for all aspects of society. The census data underpin or complement many other statistical activities undertaken by the ABS and other users of statistics.

More information on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, including information on the eCensus, which was used for the first time, can be found in the special article Chapter 7 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

2. Conduct of the 2006 Census Post Enumeration Survey

After each Census of Population and Housing, a Post Enumeration Survey (PES) is conducted to produce estimates of the proportion of the population missed, or counted more than once, in the census. The PES provides information for users on the quality of the census, and is used with the data from the census to produce estimates of the population. To improve the quality



An ABS officer interviewing for the Post Enumeration Survey

of the estimates, the 2006 PES included remote areas and discrete Indigenous communities, for the first time. In 2006–07, two information papers about how the data was collected and methods used in estimation were published, as well as a publication presenting estimates of net undercount in the census. For more information, see *Census of Population and Housing—Undercount* (cat. no. 2940.0) and *Information Paper: Measuring Net Undercount in the 2006 Population Census* (cat. no. 2940.0.55.001).

3. Implementation of an improved method for estimating net overseas migration

An improved method for estimating net overseas migration was implemented in ABS population estimates from September quarter 2006. The improved methodology was developed in response to the changing patterns of travel to and from Australia, in particular the increased propensity for travellers to interrupt longer periods of stay or absence with short trips.

Information Paper: Statistical Implications of Improved Methods for Estimating Net Overseas Migration (cat. no. 3107.0.55.005) describes the new method and provides comparisons with previously published estimates.

4. Updated population estimates

Using the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, the 2006 Census Post Enumeration Survey, and other data, the Estimated Resident Population (ERP) series for each state and territory were updated for September quarter 2001 onwards. Additional analysis and quality assurance was undertaken to improve the quality of population estimates for older persons. Consistent with the requirements of *A New Tax System (Commonwealth–State Financial Arrangements) Act 1999*, state and territory representatives were consulted prior to the release of data.

Estimates for 31 December 2006 were provided to the Australian Government Treasury for use in determining the distribution of GST to state and territory governments. The estimates were also provided for use in distributing grants under the *Local Government (Financial Assistance Grants) Act 1995*. Updated estimates for Local Government Areas and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were released in June and August 2007, respectively.

5. Changes to ABS measures of employee remuneration

Changes to the nature of employee remuneration in recent years have led to the need to review ABS measures of employee remuneration, to ensure that the conceptual basis of the measures is still sound. These changes are discussed in *Information Paper: Changes to ABS Measures of Employee Remuneration* (cat. no. 6313.0), which also describes employee remuneration arrangements, international standards for statistics of employee remuneration, the changes to conceptual treatments, and the impact of these changes on the ABS' statistical series. The changed treatment of salary sacrifice in remuneration measures is being progressively implemented in the affected series.

6. Release of the Children and Youth Information Development Plan

The *Information Paper: Improving Statistics on Children and Youth—An Information Development Plan, 2006* (cat. no. 4907.0), which was released on 8 December 2006, identifies the agreed priorities and action for information development for children and youth statistics. The paper also includes a conceptual framework, identifies key issues in the field, lists data currently available, and identifies gaps in data. It is based on a shared understanding of the key policy issue imperatives, and agreement on the areas of priority for statistical data development. The plan was endorsed by: The Australian Council for Educational Research; the Australian Institute of Criminology; the Australian Institute of Family Studies; the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth; the Department of Education, Science and Training; the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; the Department of Health and Ageing; the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research; and the Productivity Commission.

7. Development of the new occupation classification

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) was released on 11 September 2006 and was used for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, the Monthly Population Survey, and other relevant ABS collections.

ANZSCO is the product of a development program undertaken jointly by a project team from the ABS, Statistics New Zealand and the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, for use in the collection, publication and analysis of occupation statistics. The use of ANZSCO will result in improved comparability of occupation statistics produced by the two countries. ANZSCO will replace the existing Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) Second Edition and the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (NZSCO) 1999.

More information on ANZSCO is available in the special article Chapter 8 Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations.

8. Ongoing work on the Census Data Enhancement project

The Census Data Enhancement (CDE) project aims to enhance the value of data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and subsequent censuses by creating a Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD) for a 5 per cent sample of the Australian population. This project has proceeded in line with the Statement of Intention published on the ABS website in August 2005, which followed initial consultation on a proposal in 2004–05 and the preparation of a Privacy Impact Statement. This work will bring together data through statistical techniques rather than matching based on name and address. Names and addresses will not be kept.

Work in 2006–07 continued to focus on assessing matching methodologies and developing options for selection of the Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset sample, as well as the commencement of linking datasets for the various quality studies, outlined in the *Information Paper, Census Data Enhancement Project: An Update* (cat. no. 2062.0), published on the ABS website.

9. Development of the Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing

The 2007 Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing was developed during 2006–07, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, and will use an international instrument (the Computerised International Diagnostic Instrument) modified to provide information about prevalence of mental health conditions, and about use of health services.

10. Redevelopment of the National Health Survey

Following a review of the health survey, and extensive consultation with clients on information needs around mental health, the National Health Survey and the Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing instruments and procedures were developed and tested during 2006–07. The 2007–08 National Health Survey will build on previous surveys, with a stronger focus on chronic disease, and collection of measured height, weight and waist circumference.



ABS staff with the newsstand poster used by The Canberra Times to promote the Health Survey conducted by the ABS

Developments in client engagement and output enhancement

The Population and Social Statistics Program has continued to work closely with its clients to ensure:

- ◆ products and services continue to be relevant
- ◆ emerging needs of users of statistics are appreciated, and
- ◆ ABS decisions about collections and releases are understood.

The ABS continues to look for ways to strengthen engagement with key stakeholders and has established new partnerships; strategically positioned outposted officers in Australian Government agencies such as the Department of Health and Ageing, and the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; and initiated regular bilateral discussions at a senior level on key policy areas, and other drivers, requiring a statistical response.

ABS Directions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics

The Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (AGATSIS) met in February 2007, following the first meeting of the group in May 2006. This group replaces a number of survey or project-specific groups, to provide advice to the ABS on advancing its program of Indigenous statistics and setting future strategic directions. A number of Indigenous Australians are represented on AGATSIS and other members include senior staff from the government and research sectors.



Participants at the AGATSIS meeting held in February 2007

After reviewing the current policy context of Indigenous affairs, and following extensive consultation with stakeholders, including AGATSIS, the *ABS Directions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics* (cat. no. 4700.0) was released in June 2007. Six key strategic areas were identified:

- ◆ Engagement
- ◆ Understanding and measuring Indigenous wellbeing
- ◆ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth
- ◆ Indigenous engagement in economic activity
- ◆ Improved reporting and analysis of comparisons over time, and
- ◆ Regional data—improved capacity to support regional and small area analysis.

The new directions will guide new or enhanced statistical activity, to deliver future statistics and analysis that best support policy development and research.

Population wellbeing data gaps workshop—action plan

As reported in the 2005–06 annual report, a workshop on population wellbeing data gaps was held in June 2006, which was jointly organised and convened by the Treasury, the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and the ABS. The aims of the workshop were: to identify information gaps and data shortcomings considered to be highest priority; to consider mechanisms for satisfying the gaps; and to suggest strategies and ongoing processes to drive forward an effective body of statistical information on population wellbeing over the next 5–10 years.

Following the workshop, Treasury, FaCSIA and the ABS identified a range of actions where, in collaboration with other agencies, progress could be made toward achieving the stated objective of improving the information available to measure population wellbeing. These actions include:

- ◆ undertaking pilot data mapping projects
- ◆ facilitating best practice in data management and access across government
- ◆ improving the usefulness of data collections
- ◆ improving statistical frameworks and standards
- ◆ building capacity within agencies to improve statistical analysis and information management, and
- ◆ establishing an inter-agency activity plan.

The following website includes a brief overview of each area identified for future work, suggested activities for taking the issue forward, and the agencies that could collaborate to progress the work. It is anticipated that this work will be ongoing, with more detailed project plans being released as they are developed: www.nss.gov.au.

Progress has been made on mapping data that exist across agencies but are generally not in an accessible or usable form. Timetables for developing policy can be very short so having data already available would be a better solution than undertaking new collections for meeting information needs in these instances. For this reason, and to minimise reporting loads on individuals, it was agreed by the workshop participants that there needed to be some investigations of data that already exists, their readiness to be used to inform current and urgent issues, and any impediments to their use for these purposes.

The workshop participants identified early childhood, mental health, and humanitarian migrants as potential areas that would benefit from data mapping. The first pilot project involves early childhood, and is being undertaken in collaboration with Treasury, FaCSIA, the Department of Education, Science and Training, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the ABS. As well as identifying available data and the gaps or deficiencies needing to be addressed, the project will also look at data accessibility for statistical purposes, using existing business processes and governance arrangements. The project team is also considering the interagency data management model that would best deliver the outcomes being sought. The report from this first pilot project is expected to be released by the end of 2007.

Support for agencies

The Population and Social Statistics Program has continued to support the work of other agencies in developing statistical products and capability. For example, it has provided advice and expertise through membership of steering and working groups associated with the Council of Australian Governments' Review of Government Services Provision and Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage reports, and for key government-funded surveys for which other agencies are responsible. These include the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), and the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC). It has increased engagement with LSAC by providing survey development and data collection services for waves two to four of the survey, under a partnership with the Australian Institute of Family Studies and the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2004–05 the majority (56 per cent) of Australians aged 15 years and over considered their health to be very good or excellent (up from 52 per cent in 2001).

Source: *National Health Survey: Summary of Results, 2004–05* (cat. no. 4364.0).

Review of the household survey program

The Population and Social Statistics Program periodically undertakes a major review of its household survey program to ensure emerging issues are being adequately addressed and ongoing measures remain relevant. The latest review commenced in 2006. Leading up to this review, the ABS had been actively engaged with many Australian Government and state and territory government agencies and non-government users of social data to determine emerging needs and key priorities. The June 2006 Population Wellbeing Data Gaps workshop (discussed above) provided timely input to the review. The ABS has also been working with other agencies to develop a number of Information Development Plans, or similar reports, which are designed to take stock of available data, document major needs, and develop a way forward to fill those gaps, including through the household survey program.

Feedback on the state of the survey program was sought via bilateral discussions with senior staff from a small number of Australian Government agencies, who are key stakeholders in the program. A wider consultation process was conducted with other Australian Government agencies, state and territory governments, and other clients seeking their views on the draft program (in terms of content and frequency).

The priorities reflected in the broad content and frequency of a future survey program have generally been supported by key stakeholders. Detailed planning for the program including when particular surveys would best be conducted under the draft program and the funding implications if the program were to be delivered, are being developed.

Table 5.1: The Population and Social Statistics Program

Census of Population and Housing	The Census program conducts a five-yearly census of population and housing. Its aim is to accurately and efficiently measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on census night so as to provide a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each state and territory and to provide timely, high quality and relevant five-yearly benchmark data within areas of social concern (for example, housing, education, labour force) for small geographic areas and for small population groups.
Demography	The Demography program produces population estimates, 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. There are requirements in legislation for population estimates. They are also widely used for electoral and funding purposes, as well as in research and to support policy formulation and planning.
Labour Statistics	The Labour Statistics program provides information about the structure and performance of the labour market. The program produces interrelated statistics on labour supply (such as labour force participation, unemployment, employment conditions and broader measures of labour underutilisation); labour demand (such as employment, job vacancies and labour costs); and industrial relations.
Health	The Health program provides information about the health of Australia's population and about health related services. This includes statistics relating to health status, mortality, disability and factors that affect health outcomes. Statistics are also provided on the health of population groups such as children, youth and older people.
Education and Training Statistics	The Education and Training Statistics program provides measures of the levels and effects of education and training activity, and covers a range of topics relevant to education and training including school education, non-school activity, and pathways linking education and work.
Crime and Justice Statistics	The Crime and Justice Statistics program provides measures of the levels and effects of criminal activity, as well as people's perceptions of their safety and includes national statistics on recorded crime, courts and corrections. The program works to improve the quality of these collections in cooperation with statistical practitioners in the jurisdictions.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics	The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics program provides information about Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The main sources of these statistics are the five-yearly national Census of Population and Housing, surveys on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians conducted every three years (alternating between health and general social topics), and administrative data such as hospital, school and community services records.
Living Conditions Statistics	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 at risk of disadvantage. Household income, wealth, expenditure, consumption, 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.

Family and Community Statistics	The Family and Community Statistics program provides information about family and community wellbeing including time use, child care, volunteering and social capital. A further dimension is the provision of statistics for various population subgroups including women and men, couples and one-parent families, and carers.
Culture and Recreation Statistics	The Culture and Recreation Statistics program provides information about culture, sport and leisure.
Migrant Statistics	The Migrant Statistics program provides information on the characteristics and settlement outcomes for various migrant groups.
Rural and Regional Statistics	The Rural and Regional Statistics program advances the availability of regional data. 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.
Ageing Statistics	The Ageing Statistics program coordinates statistical activities in the field of ageing. Its activities include understanding current and emerging policy issues and debates, and determining what statistics might be appropriate to inform decision making.
Children and Youth Statistics	The Children and Youth Statistics program provides statistical leadership and coordination across the field of children and youth statistics with the aim of guiding and influencing statistical activity, both ABS and non-ABS, in this field.

ABS role in providing information about Australia's diverse society

The ABS provides information about Australia's diverse society. This information is made available to governments and community groups, and assists them to develop and monitor relevant issues and responses, and to take action to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers in the collection of data.

The ABS Forward Work Program includes ABS plans to meet the needs of government to support social justice and equity policies by identifying specific population groups of policy interest. Such groups include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, migrants, people with disabilities, unemployed people, older Australians, women and children. During 2006–07, the ABS continued to provide data on population, families, health and welfare, education, labour force participation, earnings and income, housing and recorded crime and justice administration.

DID YOU KNOW?

The most commonly reported long-term health conditions among older Indigenous Australians were arthritis (44 per cent), high blood pressure (42 per cent) and diabetes and high sugar levels (32 per cent).

Source: Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: A snapshot (cat. no. 4722.0.55.002).

National Migrant Statistics Unit

The National Migrant Statistics Unit was established in July 2006 in partnership with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC). This unit focuses on providing leadership in the field of migrants and ethnicity-related statistics; improving access to, and the quality of, ABS and non-ABS migrant-related statistics; and developing new statistics, where necessary, to meet identified program and policy needs. The unit is looking for ways to make better use of administrative data, where available and appropriate. These activities are aimed at informing issues related to migrant settlement outcomes including their contribution to the workforce, their health and welfare and their use of services, along with developing a greater understanding of the role that migrants and their descendants play in Australia.



Deputy Australian Statistician Susan Linacre and Department of Immigration and Citizenship Secretary Andrew Metcalfe at ABS House, at the signing of a memorandum of understanding to establish the National Migrants Statistics Unit within the ABS

Publications and other collections

2006 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

In 2006–07, the ABS released a range of statistical publications relevant to social justice and equity. The first results from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing were released in June 2007. The census provides information on how Australians are changing, and helps to inform a wide range of decisions on infrastructure and facilities. The census allows for the analysis of different levels of society, from a national picture down to a regional or community level. The 2006 Census included new questions on unpaid work and need for assistance. These new questions will assist in better understanding people's activity patterns, and the support given to others, which may help in the planning of local facilities and services.

Continuing its regular contribution to the social justice and equity area was *Australian Social Trends* (cat. no. 4102.0), an annual publication drawing on data from the ABS and other official statistics to inform on social conditions and wellbeing in Australia.

The 2005 Personal Safety Survey collected data on people's feelings of safety at home and in the community and, in particular, on the nature and extent of violence against women and men in Australia. Results were released in August 2006. The data provides information to inform public debate about violence against men and women. The data also informs the further development and evaluation of policies and programs aimed at preventing and responding to violence. For more information see *Personal Safety, Australia, 2005* (cat. no. 4906.0).

For the first time in June 2007, the ABS released experimental data for Indigenous Australian victims of a selected range of personal crimes recorded by police. Data are currently available for three states and territories—New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. The ABS will be working with other jurisdictions to collect data of sufficient quality for national reporting in the future. For more information see 'Indigenous Victims of Crime, Experimental Estimates' in *Recorded Crime—Victims, Australia, 2006* (cat. no. 4510.0).

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2006, the personal offence category recording the largest decline was attempted murder (down 11 per cent to 1.2 victims per 100 000 people), compared to 2005.

Source: *Recorded Crime Victims—Australia* (cat. no. 4510.0).

Findings from the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS) were published in May 2007. The GSS is a multidimensional social survey that covers different aspects of life, to enable analysis of the interrelationship of social circumstances and outcomes, including the exploration of multiple advantage and disadvantage. Topics covered in the 2006 GSS included: health; disability status; family relationships and engagement with wider social networks; educational opportunities and outcomes; employment and other work; financial resources; experience of financial stress; housing; residential mobility; personal safety and security; access to, understanding of, and being understood by, service providers; and access to transport. Three flexible components were added to the 2006 GSS. These components covered more detailed indicators of family and community involvement, voluntary work and visa status. For more information see *General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2006* (cat. no. 4159.0).

The Time Use Survey (TUS) was conducted in 2006, with results expected to be published in October 2007. The survey collected information on how various key groups, including women, people with disabilities, young and older people, students and parents, use their time. It covered the activities people are doing at all times through the day and night, where these activities take place and whether they are done for the household, family, work, or other people or groups. There is interest in the time spent on each type of activity and in the way the use of time is structured through the day and the week. The TUS will provide insight into issues such as unpaid work, paid work, caring for family and time spent on education.

In 2006–07 work was underway to prepare data collected in the 2005–06 Survey of Income and Housing, to be published in August 2007. This survey provides insight into the material wellbeing of the population and includes information on the household income of different population groups. These statistics are supplemented by information about household wealth. Housing is of interest as it relates to the basic human need for shelter, and for most households is either a major item of expenditure or a major form of wealth. The housing data provide information on housing affordability, housing assistance schemes and the comparison of the costs of various types of tenure.



The ABS provides information about Australia's diverse society



Section IV
SPECIAL ARTICLES

CHAPTER 6

Retirement of the Australian Statistician

Dennis Trewin retires



*Retired Australian Statistician,
Dennis Trewin*

Dennis Trewin, Australian Statistician since 2000, retired in January 2007 after a distinguished career in the ABS. He was the thirteenth person to lead the organisation since the Bureau of Census and Statistics was established in 1905.

Dennis began his ABS career in 1965 as a cadet. He received a Bachelor of Science with Honours from the University of Melbourne in 1967. Much of Dennis' early career was spent in the sampling and methodology area of the ABS. From 1974, he spent two years at the London School of Economics where he was awarded his Masters degree, majoring in statistics and econometrics.

In 1983, Dennis was appointed First Assistant Statistician, Industry Statistics Division and was responsible for upgrading the quality of business statistics and the successful conduct of business censuses. He substantially improved the division's relationship with other areas of the ABS.

In 1986, Dennis moved to the position of First Assistant Statistician, Statistical and Information Services Division, where he was responsible for the successful conduct of the 1991 Census. He played a major role in developing the marketing function in the ABS; in setting up a data warehousing project, which would ultimately become the repository for all ABS statistics; and in the introduction of CD-ROM technology to the ABS.

In 1992, Dennis was appointed as the Deputy Government Statistician, Statistics New Zealand. He set up the National and Regional Statistics Group, and improved the integration of activities during a period of significant restructuring for Statistics New Zealand. He initiated user advisory groups for social and economic statistics and strengthened external relationships with key clients and the media.

Dennis returned to Australia in 1995 to take up the role of Deputy Australian Statistician, Economic Statistics Group at the ABS. He developed a strong sense of common purpose for the newly formed group and established the Economic Statistics User Group. Dennis led the successful implementation of the 1993 version of the System of National Accounts. He also led a significant change to the conceptual basis of the Consumer Price Index in order to better meet the needs of key users. He oversaw the introduction of a more efficient business register system and a reduction of 40 per cent in the compliance cost imposed on small business, mainly through the increased use of tax data.

In July 2000, Dennis was appointed Australian Statistician. As Statistician, he effectively led the ABS through a period of significant change and ensured that the work of the ABS remained relevant as society and the economy changed and became increasingly complex. He was a

leader in the ABS moving forward with the National Statistical Service, including the scoping of the National Data Network. He also placed significant emphasis on managing relationships with users of statistics, including with state and territory governments, through greater engagement and responsiveness to their needs. Among other things, this led to increased resources for the ABS in the 2005 Australian Government Budget, which was the first injection of new budget resources to the ABS in over a decade.



Dennis Trewin launching the 2001 Census of Population and Housing

As Statistician, Dennis was responsible for two highly successful censuses, in 2001 and 2006. He was responsible for the development of a groundbreaking publication *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0) for which he was named the winner of the Society category in The Bulletin magazine's Smart 100. He also displayed a particular interest in the fast-developing field of environmental statistics and, as a member of the 2001 and 2006 State of the Environment Committees, made a significant contribution to an improved understanding of Australia's environment.

In 2005, the ABS celebrated its 100th birthday. Dennis directed the celebrations and was responsible for the publication of a comprehensive history of the ABS.

Dennis is a professional statistician. He was President of the Statistical Society of Australia from 1987 to 1988 and is a life member of the society. He is a member and former President of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and was responsible for Australia hosting the 2005 ISI fifty-fifth session in Sydney, which attracted over 2000 delegates from more than 100 countries. He was also a President of the International Association of Survey Statisticians. Dennis took a strong interest in the development of future generations of statisticians, including entering into arrangements with universities to ensure that statistical programs receive proper attention.

Dennis had extensive involvement in international statistical affairs and made significant contributions to the United Nations Statistics Commission over many years, including as convenor of the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goals Indicators. He is also the Chair of the Executive Board for the World Bank's International Comparison Program. Dennis provided international leadership in the area of microdata dissemination practices and principles and was also formerly the Chairman of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Committee on Statistics.

Dennis brought an unwavering commitment to public service to all his roles and his behaviour always exemplified high professionalism and ethical standards. Throughout his career, Dennis brokered productive working relationships, fostered talent and treated people with compassion.

We would like to wish Dennis all the best for his retirement.

CHAPTER 7

2006 Census of Population and Housing

The fifteenth Australian Census of Population and Housing was held on 8 August 2006. The first 2006 Census-based results—the estimated resident populations for Australia and the states and territories—were released by the ABS on 5 June 2007, followed by the first release of detailed results on 27 June.



The Hon Peter Costello MP, Treasurer, with the Australian Statistician, Brian Pink, at the launch of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing results

The purpose of each census is to put vital information into the hands of users across Australia. It helps Australians see how the nation is changing. It provides statistical information to assist decision making for all aspects of society. Sound decisions are most often based on good information, and the census is a very powerful source of information for governments, businesses, academics, researchers, students, community organisations and individuals. The census data underpins or complements many other statistical activities. It supports democracy through its application in the distribution of electorates across Australia and the allocation of government funding, particularly between the Australian Government and the states and territories, and in providing key information that enables the community to assess the performance of governments.

The public awareness campaign for the 2006 Census featured Ernie Dingo as the face of the census. Ernie appeared in a range of television advertisements in the lead up to census night as well as in print and radio advertisements. The advertising campaign ensured a high level of awareness and support for the census. This was supplemented with a range of public relations activities throughout the country, including a school poster competition in Melbourne, with the winning poster appearing on the side of Melbourne trams. Awareness of the census amongst the Indigenous community was assisted by the support of a number of high-profile Indigenous sports people.



Previous Australian Statistician Dennis Trewin; Australian Idol winner Casey Donovan; and Ernie Dingo at the national census launch at the National Press Club in Canberra

'All Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, should actively support the 2006 Census. The information gained from this exercise assists government and non-government agencies, like the National Aboriginal Sport Corporation, to better respond to the needs of communities, particularly Indigenous communities. The changes within communities of today can be rapid and drastic, and the census gives us the opportunity to map out these change and movements, and respond to the changing needs.'

National Aboriginal Sport Corporation

One notable feature of the 2006 Census was that very few members of the public questioned the overall worth of the census, even though they may have had concerns about particular aspects of the census.

The ABS established a telephone Census Inquiry Service to handle queries from the public. For the 2006 Census, this was contracted to an external provider, with the primary site located in Geelong and other sites in Melbourne and Sydney. Over 570 000 calls were received, with over 100 000 of these calls received in the two days before and two days after the census. A total of 788 people were employed to handle the calls. Overall, the Census Inquiry Service went well. However, it is always a challenge with an operation of this size, in matching the number of staff to the predicted number of calls. There were some peak periods where callers had difficulty getting through to an operator.

As Australia does not have a population register or a comprehensive list of all residential addresses, traditionally, local census collectors kept a record of the forms they delivered in an area and the forms that they received back. This type of record keeping is not possible when eCensus forms are completed and submitted online. To address this, a comprehensive field communications system was developed using mobile phone technology and SMS messaging, to inform collectors of electronic returns, or where paper forms had been mailed back to the ABS, as soon as the forms were received. The collectors then knew that they need not return to these households to collect forms.

'As part of our ongoing campaign to reduce coastal drowning deaths, Surf Life Saving Australia relies on data concerning population shifts to coastal areas so we can provide the optimum level of surf lifesaving services.'

Surf Life Saving Australia

One of the greatest challenges for every census is the recruitment of the 40 000 field staff required to undertake the delivery and collection of census forms throughout Australia. For the 2006 Census, 30 000 staff were involved in the delivery and collection of forms to every household in Australia. The remaining 10 000 were appointed as special collectors, to deliver and collect the forms in places such as hotels and motels, hospitals, and student accommodation. Recruitment difficulties were experienced in some areas, particularly in the Northern Territory, northern Queensland and Western Australia, due to the strong labour markets. In these areas, there was approximately the same number of applicants for collector positions as there were positions available. Even where there were sufficient applicants, as a result of the attraction of more regular work, the ABS experienced a greater proportion of collectors resigning before completing their census duties, than in any previous census.



Census collectors leaving the Tasmanian office on 28 July 2006 to start the delivery phase of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing

A range of different approaches were used to reach different population groups, including ethnic communities, truck drivers on the road on census night, 'grey nomads' holidaying in northern Australia, and the homeless.

'Information collected from the census helps charities and community organisations as well as government and business to identify the people and the places in Australia most in need of resources and support. Every five years the census gives us a snapshot of our country that helps us to evaluate our recent efforts in making Australia a fairer and better place.'

Father Chris Riley, Youth off the Streets

eCENSUS

The most noticeable change with respect to census collection for the 2006 Census was that people could complete their census form online. There were a number of statistical and technical issues that needed to be resolved to make this possible. It was particularly important to ensure that each person and household was included in the census, and not counted more than once; that people could supply their information with confidence, knowing that it would be kept secure and confidential; and that there would be sufficient capacity to handle the volume of people wanting to use the system on census night.

Technical issues revolved around ensuring the highest possible security for the eCensus system, in order to protect the confidentiality of all information supplied, and providing sufficient capacity to handle the volume of eCensus returns expected on and around census night. Implementation of the system was undertaken by an external contractor. The census data were encrypted end-to-end, and only ABS staff was able to decrypt the data. The contractor's staff had no access to the census data.

Overall, the eCensus was an overwhelming success, with 776 000 eCensus forms submitted, representing 9 per cent of the estimated number of dwellings in Australia. The public reaction to the eCensus was also overwhelmingly positive, although a small number of people experienced problems in accessing the system.

People living in Indigenous communities were counted using a specially designed census form suitable for use by interviewers. Because of the large distances that had to be covered, and the need to adapt to local cultural and other events, enumeration in these communities commenced, in some cases, before census night and continued throughout August.



Some of the newest Australians who just made the count in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing

A special simplified form was also used to enumerate people sleeping outside, and in some areas, homeless people themselves were engaged as collectors to undertake the count. Extensive promotion of the census was also undertaken in various ethnic communities, and interpreter services were provided. One of the advantages of the eCensus was that many disabled people could, for the first time, complete the census form themselves. In addition, a range of census information was provided in braille and audio form.

The 2006 Census form was the longest census form since the 1976 Census, with sixty questions asked of each household compared to fifty in 2001. In 2006, several additional sets of questions were asked. These included questions on the need for assistance (a measure of disability), and on voluntary and unpaid work. A question on access to the internet was also asked of each household, and replaced the question on the use of the internet asked of each person in the 2001 Census. In addition, the 2006 Census sought information from females aged over fifteen years about the number of children ever born to them. This question is important for fertility analysis and for estimating the future population. It has been asked in every second census.

'For the first time ever in an Australian Census, questions are asked about unpaid caring work for people with disabilities, mental illness or who are frail-aged. Unpaid caring work is so vital to our community that it is important we know exactly how many carers are out there. That way, better services and supports can be planned.'

Carers NSW

Census processing was undertaken at a centralised site in Melbourne by a staff that peaked at around 900. Processing involved the electronic scanning of the forms, data repair, and automatic coding of responses. Images of the responses that could not be automatically coded were examined by clerical staff to determine the appropriate code, which was then added to the electronic computer file. Quality assurance checks were undertaken, of both the automated and manual processes.

As for the 2001 Census, for those people who agreed to have their name identified, their census information was retained by the National Archives of Australia, and the images of the census forms were transferred to microfilm for release after ninety-nine years. In August 2105 this information will be publicly released and will be available to historians and genealogists for study. It will also be available to the descendants of those agreeing to have information retained in the Census Time Capsule. It will provide a valuable insight into how Australians lived at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The first release of data on 27 June 2007 included a large amount of information about Australia, with much more to come over the next twelve months. The data in this release reveals important changes occurring in Australian society, including: further ageing of the population; increasing cultural diversity, with English slightly less likely to be the language spoken at home; families more likely to be buying their own homes; and a decline in the number of family households, with more people living alone.

ABS MEDIA RELEASE 27 JUNE 2007

The ABS website yesterday recorded 1 693 476 hits between 0930 and 1230. The rate was 9408 hits per minute.

Response times on maps and tables—the more difficult downloads—were on average between four and ten seconds.

The Census IT Infrastructure Director, Helen Robson, said the performance of the website had been 'very impressive'.

'It just went whoosh,' she said.

'Traffic was close to estimates, and load testing had ensured that we were able to put in place measures to keep the website operating at maximum speed and availability during the peak.'

The ABS website normally gets an estimated one million hits per day.

'Accurate information about the cultural background of Australians and the range of languages that we speak is essential. Planning and funding for services that can properly meet the needs of all Australians cannot happen without it.'

Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia

Data from the 2006 Census will be largely disseminated in electronic format through the internet. The ABS census dissemination system has been completely redesigned for the 2006 Census and now incorporates a wide range of searching and mapping facilities. These facilities were progressively made available to the public, with 2001 Census data being made available in advance of the release of the 2006 Census data.

MESSAGE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN

I would like to thank the Australian public for their support of the 2006 Census and encourage all members of the community to make use of the census data, which is an invaluable resource.

CHAPTER 8

Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations

Overview

The Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) was released in September 2006. ANZSCO is intended to provide an integrated framework for storing, organising and reporting occupation-related information in both statistical and client-oriented applications, such as matching job seekers to job vacancies and providing career information. It was implemented in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing as well as other ABS collections.

Development of ANZSCO commenced in 2002 and was undertaken jointly by a project team from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Statistics New Zealand and the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. ANZSCO replaces the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) Second Edition and the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 1999, used in Australia and New Zealand, respectively. Its use will result in improved comparability of occupation statistics produced by the two countries.

Reference groups were established in Australia and New Zealand to provide guidance on the structure and content of the classification. Formal consultation was undertaken in both countries between 2002 and 2004. The purpose of the consultations was to inform stakeholders of progress and to seek their views on a number of key issues affecting the overall design and structure of ANZSCO, such as the appropriateness of the criteria used to organise occupations into groups.

Conceptual model

ANZSCO identifies a set of occupations covering all jobs in the Australian and New Zealand labour markets, defines these occupations according to their attributes, and groups them on the basis of their similarity into successively broader categories for statistical and other types of analysis.

For the purposes of ANZSCO, jobs are the individual objects being classified, and are defined as a set of tasks designed to be performed by one person for an employer (including self-employment), in return for payment of profit.

The scope of ANZSCO is all occupations and jobs in the Australian and New Zealand labour markets undertaken for pay or profit, including jobs occupied by self-employed persons. Occupations that are wholly illegal in New Zealand and all states and territories of Australia are excluded from ANZSCO.

The concept of occupation is based on the concepts of 'skill level' and 'skill specialisation'. A combination of skill level and skill specialisation are used as criteria to design groups that are meaningful and useful for most purposes.

Overview of the ANZSCO structure

The structure of ANZSCO has five hierarchical levels. The categories at the most detailed level of the classification are termed 'Occupations'. These are grouped together to form 'Unit Groups', which in turn are grouped into 'Minor Groups'. Minor Groups are aggregated to form 'Sub-Major Groups' which in turn are aggregated at the highest level to form 'Major Groups'.

The following table illustrates the distribution of these categories between the Major Groups.

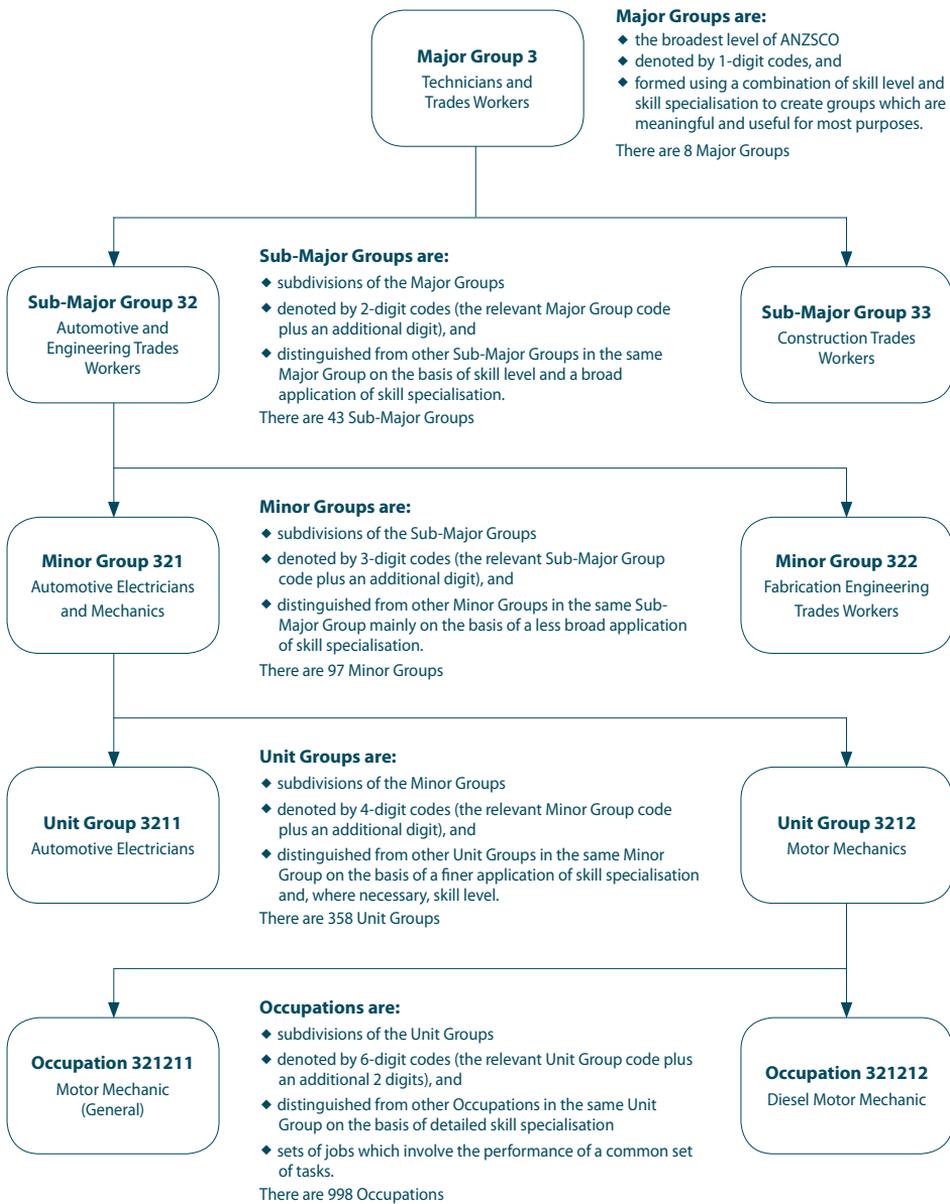
Table 8.1: Overview of ANZSCO structure

Major Group	Sub-Major Groups	Minor Groups	Unit Groups	Occupations
1 Managers	4	11	38	95
2 Professionals	7	23	100	310
3 Technicians and Trades Workers	7	21	66	174
4 Community and Personal Services Workers	5	9	36	101
5 Clerical and Administrative Workers	7	12	33	80
6 Sales Workers	3	5	19	37
7 Machinery Operators and Drivers	4	7	22	76
8 Labourers	6	9	44	125

Data classified at the Major Group level will provide only a broad indication of skill level. Data at the Sub-Major Group level will provide a satisfactory indication of skill level for many analytical purposes. Data classified at the Unit Group level will provide an accurate indication of skill level. Unit Groups can, therefore, be aggregated by skill level to provide an indicative measure of Occupations classified by skill level.

The following diagram is a profile of the ANZSCO structure.

Diagram 8.1: ANZSCO structure



Main differences between ANZSCO and ASCO Second Edition

While the classification criteria for ANZSCO are essentially the same as those used for ASCO Second Edition, the application of the skill level criterion has changed. In ASCO Second Edition, the skill level required for entry to an occupation was considered. In ANZSCO, it is the skill level required for competent performance of the set of tasks associated with the occupation, which is used.

The use of both skill level and skill specialisation to define the Major Groups in ANZSCO compared to just skill level in ASCO Second Edition has resulted in Major Groups which are more intuitively appealing and useful than their ASCO Second Edition predecessors. Accordingly, there have been changes to the way some Occupations are classified in ANZSCO.

Comparison between ANZSCO and ASCO Second Edition

The following table indicates the number of categories at each level for the respective classifications.

Table 8.2: Comparison between ANZSCO and ASCO Second Edition

Hierarchical level	ANZSCO	ASCO Second Edition
Major Group	8	9
Sub-Major Group	43	35
Minor Group	97	81
Unit Group	358	340
Occupation	998	986

The following table compares the major group titles for ANZSCO and ASCO Second Edition. Note that this table does not provide a correspondence between the two classifications.

Table 8.3: Comparison of Major Group titles between ANZSCO and ASCO Second Edition

ANZSCO	ASCO Second Edition
1 Managers	1 Managers and Administrators
2 Professionals	2 Professionals
3 Technicians and Trades Workers	3 Associate Professionals
4 Community and Personal Service Workers	4 Tradespersons and Related Workers
5 Clerical and Administrative Workers	5 Advanced Clerical and Service Workers
6 Sales Workers	6 Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers
7 Machinery Operators and Drivers	7 Intermediate Production and Transport Workers
8 Labourers	8 Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers
	9 Labourers and Related Workers

Implementation in major ABS collections

A phased introduction of ANZSCO into ABS collections began in early 2006. ANZSCO was used during 2006 in the Census of Population and Housing, the Labour Force Survey, the Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours, the General Social Survey, the Multi-Purpose Household Survey, the Time Use Survey, and the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey.

Careful consideration was given as to how ANZSCO would be introduced into the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is one of the Main Economic Indicators produced by the ABS. Between August 2006 and November 2008, information supplied by survey respondents on occupation will be dual-coded to ANZSCO and ASCO Second Edition. It is the intention of the ABS to backcast data on an ANZSCO basis for periods prior to August 2006. Details of the backcasting strategy will be determined by the end of 2007, following analysis of dual-coded data from both the LFS and the census.

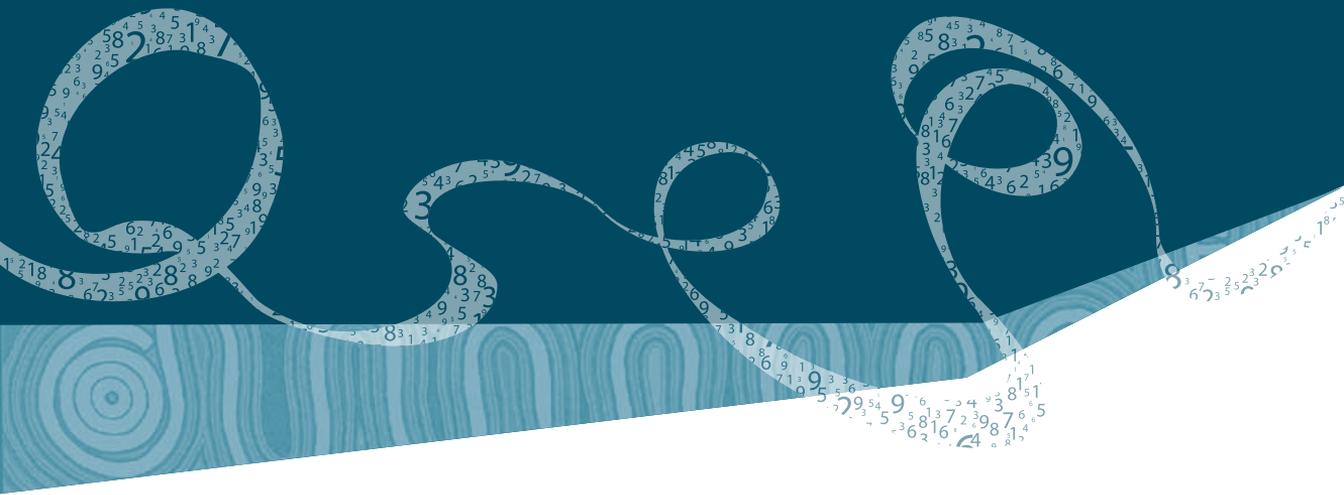
Further information

Information paper: ANZSCO—Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 2005 (cat. no. 1221.0) can be found on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au).

For further information about ANZSCO, contact the ABS National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

Section V

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION



CHAPTER 9

Summary

Introduction

The ABS:

- ◆ is the central statistical authority for the Australian Government
- ◆ provides statistical services for state and territory governments
- ◆ collects, compiles, analyses and disseminates statistics and related information
- ◆ ensures the coordination of the statistical activities of, and provides advice and assistance to, other government agencies, and
- ◆ provides a liaison between Australia and other countries and international organisations on statistical matters.

The ABS is required to report against the outcomes and outputs as specified in the 2006–07 Portfolio Budget Statements, presented to the Parliament in May 2006. As noted in Chapter 2 Overview of the ABS, the ABS has one outcome and one output group: Australian Bureau of Statistics—national statistical service. There are two subgroups in the output group: Economic Statistics and Population and Social Statistics.

The Portfolio Budget Statement for the ABS sets out performance indicators, used to evaluate the outcomes for the ABS. Four of these are against the overall outcome, and three are against the output group, as shown in Table 9.1 below.

Table 9.1: Performance indicators for the ABS

Performance information for Outcome 1	Performance information for Output 1.1
1. Integrity in statistical operations	1. Improve the quality of outputs
2. Relevance of ABS output	2. Increase the quantity of outputs
3. Appropriate use of statistical standards, frameworks and methodologies	3. Achievement of cost-effective outputs
4. Improving coordination of the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics produced by other official bodies	

A summary assessment against each of the performance indicators is outlined below. Some topics are explained in more depth in the subsequent chapters. These include:

- ◆ Engagement with users and assistance to producers of statistics
- ◆ Provider/respondent relationships
- ◆ Quality and timeliness
- ◆ Dissemination of statistics

- ◆ Extended analysis of statistics
- ◆ Statistical standards and infrastructure
- ◆ International engagement, and
- ◆ Effectiveness of activities.

Summary of performance information for Outcome 1

1. Integrity in statistical operations

1.1 An objective statistical service, as demonstrated by:

◆ *Release of reliable/accurate statistics*

During 2006–07, the ABS reviewed its approach to quality assuring the processing of statistical information, and has commenced implementing a range of measures aimed at reducing the incidence of statistical errors. The ABS releases information on any significant mistakes found in the statistics it produces.

The ABS continues to refine its products to ensure they remain relevant. For example, during 2006–07, the ABS commenced implementing a revised classification of industry, *Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, 2006* (cat. no. 1292.0), which will enable ABS statistics to better reflect the economy in the real world.

For further information see Chapter 12 Quality and timeliness, page 109; Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics, page 120; and Chapter 15 Statistical standards and infrastructure, page 137.

◆ *Open statistical process*

In 2006–07, the ABS undertook extensive user consultation on a range of statistical developments. For example, users were consulted on the proposed content of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey.

Methodological developments were open to scrutiny through information papers and the Methodological Advisory Committee. The committee meets twice every year and consists of professional statisticians external to the ABS, who provide peer review of methodological developments in the ABS.

For further information see Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics, page 83; Chapter 12 Quality and timeliness, page 109; and Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics, page 120.

◆ *Trust and cooperation of providers*

The ABS recognises its obligation to respondents in statistical collections and has produced service charters relating to both business surveys and household surveys. Continuing high-response rates demonstrate a good level of cooperation by providers. The ABS works hard to secure the trust and confidence of data providers and endeavours to reduce the burden placed on data providers by expanding the use of administrative data.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires the ABS to publish and disseminate compilations and analysis of statistical information, and to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act. The ABS meets the confidentiality requirements of the Act by ensuring that information provided is securely maintained; only used for statistical purposes; not inadvertently revealed in any published statistics; and used only in unidentifiable microdata files when supporting research and analysis.

For further information see Chapter 11 Provider/respondent relationships, page 99.

2. Relevance of ABS output

2.1 Statistical output which meets the needs of key economic and social data in terms of:

◆ *Support to decision making*

The ABS continued to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion by increasing accessibility to the outputs of statistical activities. In 2006–07, ABS statistics were used to support decision making and research. For example, statistics on the health status of the population were used to support policy development, program delivery, and evaluation of key government and non-government agencies involved in health, community and family services.

Results of collections are usually released through publications, spreadsheets and datacubes. Outputs can be accessed via the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au), and hard copy publications are still available for some releases.

For further information see Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics, page 120.

◆ *Demonstrated by a high level of use*

The ABS website remains the primary access point for the majority of users of ABS information, with site users accessing ABS web pages 101 million times in 2006–07. This was an increase of 30.2 per cent from 2005–06, and it is substantially due to the change in the ABS' pricing policy, which now provides free access to all statistics on the website.

The National Information and Referral Service (NIRS) is the main entry point to the ABS for basic information and statistical inquiries from external customers. The number of telephone calls and emails to NIRS increased in 2006–07. This is partly due to increased inquiries following the 2006 Census enumeration and output activities.

For further information see Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics, page 120.

2.2 Openness of planning process

The ABS mission statement and corporate plan provide the context and high-level framework for making decisions on the ABS' forward work program. While much of the ABS work program remains constant from year to year, the planning process requires the ABS to examine the environment in which it is working and identify future statistical needs.

The ABS undertakes user consultation regularly to gather the views of users about aspects of the ABS' work. In 2006–07 the ABS undertook a major consultation exercise in relation to the future household survey program. This involved senior level discussions held with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Health and Ageing, Treasury and other Australian Government and state and territory government agencies. These meetings assisted the ABS to better understand the agencies' highest priority areas for unmet need, and the meetings have helped the ABS to prepare the program of surveys for the future.

For further information see Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics, page 83; Chapter 18 ABS corporate governance, page 156; and Appendix 2 User groups advising the ABS, page 246.

3. Integrity in statistical operations

3.1 Lead the development of national statistical standards, frameworks and methodologies, and their implementation within the broader Australian statistical system

The ABS develops national statistical standards, frameworks and methodologies, which are applied, as appropriate, to all ABS statistical collections, including business and household surveys. The ABS takes a leading role by encouraging other Australian Government and state and territory government agencies to adopt these standards, frameworks and methodologies in their statistical activities.

The ABS also works closely with other agencies involved in the development of standards and frameworks. The ABS is leading the development of the National Data Network, which provides infrastructure, protocols, standards and services to support the sharing and integrating of data across Australia. In 2006–07, the ABS made a significant contribution to the work of the Australian Accounting Standards Board in harmonising GAAP/GFS (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles/Government Finance Statistics) reporting.

For further information see Chapter 15 Statistical standards and infrastructure, page 137.

3.2 Contribute to the development of key international standards, frameworks and methodologies, and implement them as appropriate.

The ABS supports sound methodological approaches to the development of standards, aids international comparability where meaningful, and helps ensure that such standards and statistical developments reflect Australian user interests. User interest in these types of studies continues to develop.

For environmental statistics, the ABS is engaged in international collaboration on the implementation of a framework to support environment and energy statistics known as the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA). The SEEA is aligned with the System of National Accounts (SNA) and will meet the needs of users for a coherent and consistent data system that allows for integrated environmental-economic analyses (for example, links of resource use and emissions to economic growth and distribution of income and wealth).

For further information see Chapter 16 International engagement, page 144.

4. Improving the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics produced by other official bodies

4.1 Statistical Clearing House activity

The Statistical Clearing House (SCH) pays particular attention to eliminating duplication in business surveys, and ensures that surveys conducted follow good statistical methodologies and practices.

In 2006–07, the SCH completed 107 reviews, with all being given approval to proceed. The SCH has continued to make considerable improvements in surveys, with improvements made in 28 per cent of reviews and provider load being decreased in 15 per cent of surveys.

For further information see Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics, page 83.

4.2 Assisting other official bodies with integration of administrative and statistical data, including outposting ABS officers, and providing training on statistical standards, frameworks and methodologies

The ABS provides assistance through outposted officers, training courses, the development of the National Data Network (NDN), and by supporting projects on statistical developments. In 2006–07, ABS officers were outposted to six Australian Government departments, and fourteen state and territory government departments.

The National Statistical Training Institute (NSTI) in the ABS, along with the state and territory Statistical Services units in each regional office, coordinated the development and presentation of a wide range of training courses on statistical issues in 2006–07. In 2006–07 the NSTI conducted a number of training courses for users of ABS statistics, with 705 participants from other agencies.

The ABS supports projects on statistical developments. For example, in 2006–07, the ABS worked closely with the National Water Commission and other government and non-government agencies as part of the Australian Water Resources 2005 project. The purpose of this project was to prepare a baseline assessment of Australia's water resources.

The ABS is an active member of steering committees and working groups for a range of major statistical projects. For example, in 2006–07, the ABS joined a subgroup of the Council of Australian Governments' Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Group, which is developing the legislative framework and governance arrangements for streamlining greenhouse and energy reporting.

For further information see Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics, page 83.

4.3 Identifying, storing and disseminating statistics from other official bodies

The ABS works closely with a range of partners to extend the use of statistics by exploring their needs for information, by examining potential data sources (from ABS and elsewhere) that may assist in meeting these needs, and by advising on issues around the collection of statistics. For example, in 2006–07, the ABS worked closely with the National Water

Commission and other government and non-government agencies as part of the Australian Water Resources 2005 project. The purpose of this project was to prepare a baseline assessment of Australia's water resources. The ABS provided water use data for inclusion in several Australian Water Resources 2005 outputs. This entailed releasing existing ABS products earlier than previously planned, undertaking new collections, and adding value to existing data.

During 2006–07, the ABS has continued to develop information development plans, including: the development by the ABS of an information development plan on innovation; the release on 8 December 2006 of *Information Paper: Improving Statistics on Children and Youth—An Information Development Plan* (cat. no. 4907.0); and the publication on 31 October 2006 of *Information Paper: Emergency Management Information Development Plan* (cat. no. 1385.0).

For further information see Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics, page 83.

Summary of performance information for Outcome 1, output group 1.1

1. Improve the quality of outputs

1.1 Achieve or exceed timeliness, statistical reliability, response rates and accuracy objectives:

◆ *Timeliness*

The timeliness of statistical information can be measured by the gap between the reference period (the period to which the data relate) and the date of release of results. The ABS continues to adhere to pre-announced release dates and make improvements, where possible, to the timeliness achieved.

The high standard of timely release of statistical tables was maintained in 2006–07. The greatest change since last year has been the improvement in timeliness for general tabular statistics.

For further information see Chapter 12 Quality and timeliness, page 109.

◆ *Statistical reliability*

The ABS aims to produce high-quality statistics that can be used with confidence. In 2006–07, the ABS continued to take steps to maintain and improve the reliability of statistics. The ABS regularly reviews the methodologies used to produce statistics, providing the opportunity to make improvements and incorporate new approaches, where appropriate. For example, the methodology used for the Census Post-Enumeration Survey was reviewed to ensure that the population estimates produced following the 2006 Census of Population and Housing are as accurate as possible.

For further information see Chapter 12 Quality and timeliness, page 109.

◆ *Response rates*

In 2006–07, the ABS maintained high-response rates. For example, the Economic Activity Survey has a target response rate of 86 per cent. In 2006–07 the response rate for the survey was 93 per cent. Maintaining high-response rates is a major focus for the household survey program, particularly given the increasing number of interviews that are conducted during the limited evening hours (up to 8 pm).

For further information see Chapter 11 Provider/respondent relationships, page 99.

◆ *Accuracy*

The accuracy of statistical information is the degree to which the information correctly describes the phenomena it was designed to measure. Descriptions of accuracy, as well as extensive information on the statistical methods used in collections, are routinely provided in concepts, sources and methods publications, the explanatory notes in publications, and through the Statistical Clearing House.

In 2006–07, the ABS continued to work towards ensuring that statistics released were accurate. For example, a new methodology for compiling the established house price index was implemented, with details released in *Information Paper: House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities, March 2007* (cat. no. 6146.0).

For further information see Chapter 12 Quality and timeliness, page 109.

2. Increase the quantity of outputs

2.1 Increase the range of statistics disseminated

The ABS released an extensive range of statistics in 2006–07. The number of publications released in 2006–07 was 711, which is a decrease from 781 (8.9 per cent) in 2005–06. However, the decrease in publication numbers is due to the increase in the amount of data that is released as datacubes and spreadsheets. The number of datacubes and spreadsheets increased from 5373 in 2005–06 to 7546 (40 per cent) in 2006–07.

During 2006–07, the ABS released twelve new Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs), including eight Expanded CURFs. For the first time in 2006–07, a further eight historical CURFs were released on the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL)[™].

In addition, over 4000 historical publications were released to the website.

For further information see Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics, page 120.

2.2 Innovative outputs

In 2006–07, the ABS continued to make outputs more accessible. The ABS has established an electronic publication and metadata vision (evision), with an aim of increasing the use of statistics and improving understanding of the content. For the first results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, the ABS offered a new and improved online product range, including QuickStats, MapStats and Census Tables.

In addition, CURFs are available for thirty-four ABS surveys and, as of 1 July 2006, they are a standard ABS statistical product. The price of CURFs was reduced on 1 July 2006, from \$8000 to \$1320 per CURF. The price reduction was welcomed by the research community and has led to a greater number of users accessing CURF microdata during 2006–07.

The ABS regularly reviews the methodology used to produce statistics, to enhance the usefulness of data to encourage and inform decision making amongst governments and the community. Analytical work undertaken by the ABS provides opportunities to incorporate improvements and new approaches, where appropriate. In 2006–07, the ABS undertook a range of analytical work. For example, research was undertaken, and a new method for deriving more accurate measures of grade progression or retention in secondary schools was proposed, to ensure continued relevance for policy analysis.

For further information see Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics, page 120; and Chapter 14 Extended analysis of statistics, page 132.

3. Achievement of cost-effective outputs

3.1 Conduct efficiency reviews and audits, and implement their recommendations

The ABS endeavours to find ways to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. A number of processes, systems and controls have been implemented, for both statistical and non-statistical activities, to assist the ABS to meet these goals of greater efficiency and effectiveness. These include the strategic audit and review program, operational and statistical reviews, as well as special initiatives such as the operations research initiative.

In 2006–07, the Operations Research Unit was established to identify improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of ABS survey processes by applying scientific methods to the analysis of Para data (data about ABS operations) collected daily as part of the ABS survey processes. A number of strategies for improving cost-effectiveness of ABS data collections and/or reducing burden on data providers have been identified.

For further information see Chapter 17 Effectiveness of activities, page 151.

3.2 Test operating efficiencies of statistical activities by benchmarking internally and externally

Many of the reviews and audits conducted seek to ensure that the ABS achieves cost-effective outputs, either as a primary or secondary objective. A key approach in achieving this is benchmarking ABS activities against similar activities elsewhere in the ABS, in other agencies in Australia, or overseas agencies. This provides the opportunity for the ABS to understand and learn from best practice, and to improve its performance.

In 2006–07, an internal review was commissioned by the ABS to investigate any measurement errors in the national accounts estimates of gross domestic product (GDP). The review was completed in November 2006 and concluded that there were no significant or systematic sources of measurement error in the national accounts estimates of GDP. However, the review made fourteen recommendations in relation to aspects of the national accounts, all of which were accepted by the ABS.

For further information see Chapter 17 Effectiveness of activities, page 151.

3.3 Market test a number of non-statistical activities to identify possible outsourcing opportunities

During 2006–07, twelve new consultants were engaged to carry out projects, or provide professional and technical advice that could not be provided by staff of the ABS. The total expenditure of the twelve new consultancies during 2006–07 was \$481 670. Eleven consultancies had been let in previous years, and these continued into 2006–07, with a total expenditure of \$312 948 for 2006–07.

In 2006–07, the ABS looked for efficiency gains by conducting a joint tender process with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, to secure a new panel of training providers. The panel is now in place and has enabled the ABS to secure the services of a range of companies to deliver on its diverse requirements, including leadership, management and supervision, project management, writing skills, and to facilitate forward work planning days.

For further information see Chapter 17 Effectiveness of activities, page 151; and Appendix 3 Consultancy services, page 249.

3.4 Minimise respondent load

The burden placed on data providers is closely monitored and minimised as much as possible, through ensuring data is of a high priority, and via good sample and questionnaire design. The ABS continues its endeavours to reduce the burden placed on data providers by expanding the use of administrative data.

For example, in 2006–07, significant changes were introduced to the methodology of the Agricultural Census, associated with the scoping of units, sample and frame management procedures and estimation. These changes have improved the accuracy of the statistics and reduced the resources required to maintain the population frame.

Further development of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing instruments was also completed in 2006–07, and will allow ABS staff to record and retrieve interactions with data providers more effectively.

The 2006 Census saw the introduction of the eCensus, an online facility, which respondents could use to return their census information. To minimise provider load, the eCensus only displayed questions relevant to an individual, whilst indicating the questions that were being missed.

For further information see Chapter 11 Provider/respondent relationships, page 99; and Chapter 17 Effectiveness of activities, page 151.

CHAPTER 10

Engagement with users and producers of statistics

Introduction

The ABS' objective, as outlined in Chapter 1 Australian Statistician's review of 2006–07, and Chapter 3 ABS and the national statistical system, is to lead an effective national statistical service (NSS). This involves providing statistical services that meet the needs of users in government and the broader community. It also involves working with those who are holders of statistical data that can be part of the national statistical service—coordinating statistical services, and assisting the holders in making the data available. Thus, the engagement of the ABS with users and producers of statistical services is vital to meeting this objective.

Reflecting the wide range of users and producers of statistical services, the ABS uses a variety of mechanisms to engage with them, including:

- ◆ participating in a wide variety of meetings
- ◆ working in partnership
- ◆ placing outposted officers in departments and agencies, and
- ◆ conducting training courses.

In addition, the ABS is responsible for the Statistical Clearing House, which reviews business surveys proposed by the Australian Government.

National Statistical Service

In recent years, the ABS has been examining its role in leading the national statistical service, and how to better coordinate, enhance and expand the service. Key to this is engaging effectively with users and producers of statistics, and exploring new ways of providing assistance. While all the approaches described in this chapter contribute to this aim, a key initiative has been the development of the National Data Network (www.nationaldatanetwork.org) as a resource for users and producers of statistics. For more information see Chapter 3 ABS and the national statistical service.

Australian Government and state and territory government departments and agencies hold considerable amounts of information, and the ABS has been working closely with them to explore and utilise these data holdings. Such partnerships will continue to be a crucial part of continuing to enhance the national statistical service.

The ABS facilitates the Australian Government Statistical Forum, which aims to provide strategic directions for NSS developments. The forum, which meets twice a year, discusses key national and international statistical developments, to facilitate and encourage communication amongst senior staff of Australian Government agencies, with important roles in the NSS. Presentations made during 2006–07 included: aligning the use of spatial data across government; approaches to developing a national statistical policy for Australia; using micro

simulation and Geographic Information Systems capabilities to support service delivery decision; and the statistical work of the Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics in the Department of Transport and Regional Services.

ABS Regional Directors have been working closely with state and territory governments in assessing their statistical priorities. The annual State Statistical Forum, where the state and territory nominees on ASAC meet together, always includes discussion of state and territory statistical priorities. In the 2008 meeting, there will be a strong focus on how to work together to meet these priorities, using all potential data sources, not just looking to ABS to conduct surveys.

National Data Network

The National Data Network (NDN) uses collaborative approaches to promote access and use of quality statistics. Australia has a strong statistical system but, unlike information on the internet, collections of data held within different organisations are not easy to discover or access. The NDN aims to achieve the best use and return on investment from survey and administrative information resources by:

- ◆ providing owners and custodians of information resources with a means of giving greater visibility and wider access to their information resources, while continuing to give close attention to access and use conditions, and
- ◆ providing researchers and analysts with an improved means of finding and accessing information resources, particularly those information resources that are not publicly available.

Fundamental to the design of the NDN is the provision of a collaborative environment and governance framework in which organisations have direct control over the visibility and accessibility of data they make available and the opportunity to share good practice and tools.

During 2006–07, the demonstration phase of the NDN continued with the establishment of a number of collaborations with web service providers, including:

- ◆ signing a memorandum of agreement with the United States Census Bureau regarding the cooperative development between the ABS' National Data Network and the US Census Bureau's Data Ferrett/Data Web service
- ◆ working with Macquarie University and their Meta Access Management System project on federated identity management software
- ◆ cooperating with the Queensland Government on implementation of the Creative Commons licensing framework, and
- ◆ assisting CSIRO Mathematical and Information Sciences with the Privacy Preserving Analytics tool, which is a remote analysis service allowing analysis of a dataset through a secure privacy preserving interface.

In addition, the branch head responsible for the NDN provided an advisory role to the Data for Science Working Group, which reported to the Prime Minister's Science and Engineering Innovation Council in December 2006 and provided input to the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy Investment Plan.

At the end of the 2006–07 demonstration phase there are nine NDN custodians, more than 100 information resources in the NDN Central Catalogue and over 150 registered NDN users.

- ◆ The following organisations are participating as Full Nodes: ABS, Queensland Office of Economic and Statistical Research, Telethon Institute of Child Health Research, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and Tasmanian Department of Police and Emergency Services.
- ◆ The following organisations are participating as Lite Nodes: Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmanian Department of Education, NSW Department of Planning, and Cystic Fibrosis Association of Australia.

In 2007–08 the NDN will move into a pilot phase with the objectives of:

- ◆ providing leadership in the use of statistical and administrative data through facilitation of information resource feasibility
- ◆ establishing the NDN's usefulness in informing policy outcomes, and
- ◆ proving the technical feasibility of the initiative.



Michael O'Loughlin and Adam Goodes from the Sydney Swans at the Sydney Cricket Ground, with ABS staff: Indigenous Engagement Manager, Glenda Roberts; Statistical Coordination (Indigenous officer), Gloria Strachan; and Census PR Manager (NSW), Andrew Bradley

Meetings with users and producers of statistics

The ABS meets with users and producers of statistical services in a wide variety of forums, including:

- ◆ participating in bilateral meetings with key agencies and departments
- ◆ participating in cross-agency meetings where statistical issues are discussed
- ◆ convening meetings of users and/or producers to look at issues in a particular area of interest, and
- ◆ consulting on an ad hoc basis in relation to particular initiatives or projects.

In 2006–07, the ABS undertook a major consultation exercise in relation to the future household survey program. This involved senior level discussions held with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Health and Ageing, Treasury and other Australian Government and state and territory government agencies. These meetings assisted the ABS to better understand the agencies' highest priority areas for unmet need and the meetings have helped the ABS to prepare the program of surveys for the future. For more information on the review of the household survey program see Chapter 5 Population and Social Statistics Program.

Examples of other meetings held in 2006–07 are presented below.

Executive level meetings with key users and producers:

Discuss emerging issues and the need for data

During 2006–07, the ABS met with the executives of Australian Government agencies, including Treasury, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Health and Ageing. The aim of these meetings was to gain an awareness of needs in the current ABS statistical program, and to build support for initiatives considered for the future ABS work program.

ABS executive staff met with senior staff from the tourism division of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR) to discuss tourism statistics, including work undertaken by the ABS to contribute to a review of the international standards for Tourism Satellite Accounts.

Regular meetings were held between the ABS Queensland Regional Director and the Queensland State Government Statistician. A range of issues were discussed including statistical priorities for Queensland Government agencies, including information on Indigenous people in the labour force.

As a result of an executive level meeting, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the Australian Statistician and the head of the Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority, which set out the framework for cooperation between the two agencies. The framework will facilitate the comparability of financial statistics through cooperation on the definitions, collection and publication of information from the finance industry.

Participation in groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Group The ABS joined a subgroup of the Council of Australian Governments Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Group, which is developing the legislative framework and governance arrangements for streamlining greenhouse and energy reporting. ◆ Longitudinal Surveys Advisory Group The ABS joined a new Longitudinal Surveys Advisory Group, which was established by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). The group will provide strategic and policy advice for the future development of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey and the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children. ◆ National Committee for Housing Information The ABS is a member of the National Committee for Housing Information—a national housing data committee established by the Housing Minister’s Advisory Council. It is responsible for the development and management of the national and Indigenous housing data. ◆ Tasmania’s Demographic Change Advisory Council The Demographic Change Advisory Council, which is chaired by the Tasmanian Treasurer, brings together senior government ministers and community and business representatives to research and analyse trends relating to demographic change, and to lead and influence discussion and encourage information sharing regarding Tasmania’s demographic opportunities and challenges. The ABS Tasmanian Regional Director has observer status on the council and the ABS also participates on a steering group to advise the council.
<i>Contribute to discussions on information needs and data sources, and gain an understanding of the way information is used</i>	
Formal user and advisory groups established by the ABS:	<p>The ABS convenes a wide range of user and advisory groups. A full list of groups is provided in Appendix 2 User groups advising the ABS. Below are some examples of the work done by the groups.</p> <p>The Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group was formed to provide advice to the ABS on rural and regional statistics priorities, development, adequacy and availability from both government and research perspectives. At their biennial meeting in November 2006, the group identified and discussed emerging issues that relate to data priorities for rural and regional areas. Issues discussed at the meeting included assessing the social, environmental and economic consequences of the introduction of water license trading; monitoring the effects that climate change, drought and water management have on regions; and measuring the impact of humanitarian settlement on regional communities and the involvement of migrants in the community.</p>
<i>Discuss issues relating to the ABS statistical program</i>	

The Health Statistics Advisory Group (HSAG) is a representation of key organisations that use ABS health data. The group advises the ABS on health statistics developments and priorities along with the content for the ABS' health survey program. The ABS conducted a Review of Strategic Statistical Issues for Future National Health Surveys to determine a strategic approach to managing the scope, content and coverage of future National Health Surveys, and ensure integrations with other national and international health surveys. Proposals were discussed at several meetings of the HSAG and the final proposals were strongly supported at the most recent meeting.

The Economic Statistics User Group has provided information and guidance on a wide range of issues, including the ABS' strategic direction, the update to the System of National Accounts and the Balance of Payments Manual, the implications of revisions to international trade classifications, and progress with the implementation of Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006 and the Business Longitudinal Database.

The State Accounts User Group has been consulted about using the production approach for the development of estimates of Gross State Product. These newly developed estimates will be implemented in the 2007 release of the annual State Accounts, resulting in a significant improvement in the quality of these estimates.

Consultations on statistical activities:

Gather the views of users about aspects of the ABS' work

Since June 2007, ABS has been consulting with the Australian Government Treasury, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Productivity Commission about ABS plans to implement revisions to standards in the System of National Accounts and Balance of Payment Manual.

A consultative workshop conducted for tourism indicators raised awareness of the many indicators that currently exist for the tourism field of statistics. There is now a better understanding of the existence and impact of revisions to the estimates, and a greater engagement of clients with the ABS on both the Tourism Satellite Account and proposed international changes to standards.

Other consultations have taken place in the following areas:

- ◆ the proposed content of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
 - ◆ the future direction of regional statistics
 - ◆ the strategic review of ABS health surveys
 - ◆ a proposal to publish experimental Indigenous Australian data from the recorded crime victims collection for New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory, published on 2 June 2007 in Appendix 2 of *Recorded Crime—victims, Australia, 2006* (cat. no. 4510.0)
 - ◆ priority setting for information technology related statistics, and
 - ◆ review and evaluation of the 2006 Census Indigenous enumeration strategy.
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Australian Statistician Brian Pink, and Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority Chairman Dr John Laker, at the signing of a memorandum of understanding, which set out the framework for cooperation between the two agencies

Partnerships on statistical activities

The ABS works closely with a range of partners to extend the use of statistics by exploring their needs for information, by examining potential data sources (from ABS and elsewhere) that may assist in meeting these needs, and by advising on issues around the collection of statistics. Below are some examples of partnerships with users and producers of statistics in 2006–07.

◆ Council of Australian Governments

The ABS has been involved in assisting to meet data gaps for some Council of Australian Governments (COAG) priorities. Health data was provided for the Human Capital Reform group, with a specific focus on diabetes. The ABS prepared three reports for the COAG skills shortage project. One of these reports included a survey instrument that could be used to collect information on skills shortages for particular regions and industries. In December 2006, this instrument for regional surveys was posted on www.skillsinfo.gov.au.

◆ Department of Health and Ageing

The ABS and the Department of Health and Ageing entered an agreement that sets out the strategic framework for optimising investments in health statistics.



Jane Halton, Department of Health and Ageing Secretary, and Dennis Trewin, previous Australian Statistician, at the signing of the memorandum of understanding

◆ Suicide Coding Working Group

A Suicide Coding Review Working Group was established by the ABS Health and Vitals Statistics Unit, in conjunction with key stakeholders, to address discrepancies in coding cause of death as suicide. Key organisations involved in this group include the National Centre for Classification in Health, the Australian Institute of Suicide Research and Prevention, the Queensland State Coroner and a representative of the Victorian State Coroner's Office, the National Coronial Information System, and the Queensland Child Death Review Team. This initiative has resulted in greater understanding of ABS data amongst key users.

◆ Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

In 2006–07, ABS continued to contribute to a steering group for the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children, convened by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The ABS played an important role in progressing two pilot studies, which have now changed as a result of funding decisions.

◆ Victorian Department of Human Services

The ABS worked with the Victorian Department of Human Services to redesign the School Entrant Health Questionnaire (SEHQ) which provides vital data on the health, safety, development, learning and wellbeing of young children in Victoria, and is a component of the Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System. The ABS also provided advice on variables required to enable data linkage between SEHQ and the Victorian Perinatal Data Collection.

◆ NSW Department of Community Services

The ABS worked with the Department of Community Services to provide information needed to review early intervention practices relating to the Families First initiative.

- ◆ National Water Commission

In 2006–07, the ABS worked closely with the National Water Commission and other government and non-government agencies as part of the Australian Water Resources 2005 project. The purpose of this project was to prepare a baseline assessment of Australia's water resources. The ABS provided water use data for inclusion in several Australian Water Resources 2005 outputs. This entailed releasing existing ABS products earlier than planned, undertaking new collections, and adding value to existing data.

In addition, the National Water Commission, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Department of Environment and Water Resources funded the ABS to 'mesh block' code the 2005–06 Agricultural Census, in order to deliver more flexible geographical outputs, such as for natural resource management areas and river basins. For more information on mesh blocks see Chapter 15 Statistical standards and infrastructure.

- ◆ Social Economic National Coordination Committee

The ABS has continued engagement with the Social Economic National Coordination Committee of the National Land and Water Resources Audit. The ABS has been invited to contribute to a 'land managers' capacity to change' research project, to attend national resource management regional forums, and to contribute to relevant National Land and Water Resources Audit information products.

- ◆ Executive Steering Committee for Australian Water Resources

The ABS' continued engagement with water policy and information stakeholders has led to greater involvement in whole-of-government and multi-jurisdictional forums such as the Executive Steering Committee for Australian Water Resources. It has also led to closer working relationships with key stakeholders such as the National Water Commission, Department of Environment and Water Resources, Bureau of Meteorology and the Water Accounting Development Committee.

- ◆ National Land and Water Resources Audit and the Bureau of Rural Sciences

The ABS has worked closely with the National Land and Water Resources Audit and the Bureau of Rural Sciences to contribute knowledge and statistical information to support the development of the Signposts project. This project aims to provide Australian agricultural industries with a tool to assess, illustrate and demonstrate how their activities contribute to ecologically sustainable development in Australia.

- ◆ Productivity Commission

The ABS worked with the Productivity Commission and examined the diversity of farm irrigation practices and management, which culminated in the publication of *Characteristics of Australia's Irrigated Farms, 2000–01 to 2003–04* (cat. no. 4623.0). This report provided a detailed statistical description of farms that used and traded irrigation water in the period 2000–01 to 2003–04, and provided estimates of the contribution of selected irrigated activities to the gross value of Australia's agricultural production. It is intended that the statistical and other descriptive information provided in this report will support wider analyses to identify farm management and resource use practices that contribute to the productivity and efficiency of irrigation water use.

- ◆ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

The ABS worked with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to develop questions for inclusion in the 2006–07 Natural Resource Management survey. This survey will collect information on farmers' perceptions of changed climate, providing much needed input into climate change policy and decision making processes by Australian Government and state and territory government agencies, as well as the COAG Climate Change Group.

- ◆ Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics

The ABS and the Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics assessed the fitness-for-purpose of the Survey of Motor Vehicle Use and found that it meets the broad needs of the Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics. The partnership strengthened the relationship between the two agencies; increased the analytical understanding of data quality and the use of the data in policy and decision making; and improved the quality of ABS publications relating to the survey.

- ◆ Australian Innovation Research Centre

The ABS provided conceptual and methodological advice to staff working in the Australian Innovation Research Centre as part of the Centre's development of an experimental survey which plans to measure innovation amongst businesses in Tasmania.

- ◆ South Australian Government

The Statistics Program South Australia is an ongoing partnership between the ABS and the government of South Australia, with the aim of enhancing the analytical skills of state government employees. Six government agencies have officers working with ABS officers on statistical projects of strategic value to the state. The ABS officers provide statistical advice on the projects, as general statistical training. On returning to their own agencies, the state government officers are encouraged to share their statistical skills with colleagues and further develop state government statistical capability.

The ABS in South Australia has also worked closely with the state government to create standard regional boundaries for South Australia's strategic plan.

Information Development Plans

Information Development Plans (IDPs) involve a review of the needs of users in a particular area of statistics, a review of the available sources of data, an assessment of the gaps and overlaps in information available, and recommendations (agreed with other data users and holders) on a future work program. In 2006–07, development began on an IDP for innovation, and two IDPs were released:

- ◆ *Information Paper: Improving Statistics on Children and Youth—An Information Development Plan* (cat. no. 4907.0), released on 8 December 2006, and
- ◆ *Information Paper: Emergency Management Information Development Plan* (cat. no. 1385.0), released on 31 October 2006.

The ABS worked in partnership with Biotechnology Australia on the Biotechnology Statistics Information Development Plan, which was published in December 2006. ABS and Biotechnology Australia jointly convened the Biotechnology Statistics User Group and

consulted extensively with members of the group in developing the IDP. A key gap identified in the IDP will be addressed through an experimental biotechnology survey. In the first half of 2007, the ABS provided specialist advice to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, as part of the survey's development process.

NATIONAL STATISTICS CENTRES

Many areas in the ABS participate in discussions with users of statistics, particularly through the National Statistics Centres (NSCs). The NSCs were established to provide expert assistance to users in a designated field of statistics, and to ensure that ABS developments in each of these fields are forward looking and aligned with key user needs.

Staff have expertise in matters of policy issues and developments in their field, and build close links with relevant clients. Their role is to contribute to the development of statistics in national and international contexts, within their field.

Some examples of user consultation undertaken by NSC staff include:

- ◆ Business Demographics NSC staff worked with the Department of Agriculture and the Office of Small Business to provide counts of businesses in drought-declared areas.
- ◆ Family and Community NSC staff reviewed drafts of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2007 publication titled *Young Australians: Their Health and Wellbeing*. Staff of the Children and Families Household Survey Centre also provided input on the development of the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research's 2008 Child Health and Wellbeing survey, and are represented on their survey development group.
- ◆ The Economic Conditions NSC conducted a user review of products associated with Retail Trade (cat. no. 8501.0), *Business Indicators* (cat. no. 5676.0) and *Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure* (cat. no. 5625.0).

Community Indicators

The ABS worked with a range of agencies, particularly at the state and territory level, to develop and prepare community indicators. In addition to the projects outlined below, this work also involved bringing many parties together, from within Australia and overseas, in a Community Indicator Workshop.

The ABS hosted the Community Indicator Workshop on 5–6 September 2006, in Melbourne. The aim of the workshop was to share Australian and international experiences in the development of progress measures, community and wellbeing indicators, and to clarify future development of this activity in Australia. This was a valuable opportunity for networking and understanding how the different levels of government develop, implement and use community indicators.

Outcomes of the workshop include additional input as a result of the discussions into regional, national and international development in this field of statistical work, as well as consideration of the ABS' leadership role in the community indicators' area.



Deputy Statistician Susan Linacre, and participants at the national community indicators workshop

The following projects all relate to community indicators.

Agency partner	Project
New South Wales Department of Premier and Cabinet	An outposted officer worked with the Department of Premier and Cabinet on the development of statistical indicators for the New South Wales State Plan.
Queensland Spatial Information Council	The ABS collaborated with the Queensland Spatial Information Council on a workshop which promoted integrated data sharing between government agencies. The workshop assisted the development, identification, collection and application of Healthy Communities indicators which will strengthen regional and community planning processes.
Western Australian Department of Indigenous Affairs and the Department of the Attorney General	The ABS is working in partnership with the Department of Indigenous Affairs and the Department of the Attorney General to develop the Western Australia Indicator Framework System (WAIFS) which will store metadata and data associated with State Government Performance Indicator Frameworks. The main objectives of the project are to reduce the reporting burden to state government; to increase comparability and data quality across multiple indicator frameworks; and to ensure regular maintenance and reporting against these frameworks. In the longer term it is expected that the project will lead to increased sharing of metadata and data across Western Australia government agencies for research, reporting, decision making and policy formulation purposes.

Agency partner	Project
Tasmania Together Project	The ABS has continued its support for the Tasmania Together Project, assisting with the development of goals, benchmarks and indicators. ABS has also provided assistance in identifying existing data sources for these indicators, or methods for collecting and reporting data to fill existing gaps.

Providing outposted officers to key clients

Another way the ABS achieves its objective of engaging with users and producers is by outposting statistical officers to Australian Government and state and territory government agencies. The purpose of many of the longer-term ABS outposted officer positions in Australian Government agencies is to ensure a strong and effective working relationship between the ABS and those agencies. As such, ABS outposted officers contribute to informed decision making by those agencies. The primary objectives of these longer-term relationship-focused outpostings are to:

- ◆ strategically engage the host agency on emerging issues, to identify opportunities for the ABS to assist in making informed policy decisions in the future
- ◆ feed knowledge of emerging issues back to ABS to ensure that agency needs are understood and considered as part of the ABS Forward Work Program
- ◆ promote strong statistical capabilities and structures within the agency to improve their ability to understand and effectively use data
- ◆ enhance cooperation between the host agency and ABS
- ◆ support the agencies' current and future information and analytical needs, and
- ◆ ensure coordination between agency statistical activities including collecting and disseminating information to reduce duplication of effort and to promote standards. This will improve the comparability of data and cost effectiveness of data gathering activities.

Other outpostings have a different focus, such as facilitating access to, and an understanding of, statistics. Outpostings can also be short-term, to assist with a particular project or issue, such as the ABS outpost to assist with the Productivity Commission's 2007 *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* report. The outposted officer supported the compilation of statistics from ABS collections, and associated analysis.

Each ABS outposting is tailored to suit the needs of the agency.

The ABS outposted officer in the New South Wales Premier's Department has assisted with improving the quality of statistical indicators used for the New South Wales State Plan. Subsequent to this, ABS has been working with the department on a number of issues towards a more integrated statistical service and assessment of the tasks required to improve the statistical data base for New South Wales.

An outposting is currently underway at the Department of Queensland Transport, which is responsible for developing and managing the land, air and sea transport environment in Queensland. The ABS officer is assisting the agency to: improve compatibility and consistency in classifications used and treatment of data; conduct research on data quality issues; and promote standards and statistical training.

ABS statistical advice, provided by an outposted officer to Mineral Resources Tasmania (MRT), led to an improved understanding of the quality and limitations of MRT data and provided the agency with a process to increase the accuracy and timeliness of data, including the data provided to the ABS.

TABLE 10.1: Agencies with long-term ABS outposted officers, 2006–07

Level of government	Number in 2005–06	Number in 2006–07	List of outposted officers in 2006–07
Australian	7	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Australian Taxation Office ◆ Commonwealth Grants Commission ◆ Department of Education, Science and Training ◆ Department of Employment and Workplace Relations ◆ Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs ◆ Department of Health and Ageing ◆ Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources ◆ Productivity Commission
State and territory	12	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NSW Premier's Department—two officers ◆ Vic Department of Treasury and Finance ◆ Vic Department of Premier and Cabinet ◆ Vic Department of Sustainability and Environment ◆ Vic Department of Primary Industries ◆ Vic State Services Authority ◆ Vic Department of Human Services ◆ Vic Department for Victorian Communities ◆ Qld Department of Queensland Transport ◆ WA Department of Industry and Resources ◆ WA Department of Premier and Cabinet ◆ WA Telethon Institute for Child Health Research ◆ NT Treasury

Training courses assisting users to optimise their use of ABS statistics

The ABS conducts a range of training courses to assist users in understanding ABS statistics. These courses can also be beneficial to the ABS staff conducting them, as they provide an opportunity to discuss user needs and concerns.

The National Statistical Training Institute (NSTI) in the ABS, along with the state and territory statistical services units in each regional office, coordinated the development and presentation of a wide range of training courses on statistical issues in 2006–07. The demand for external statistical training by the NSTI for government agencies continues to grow.

For example, a pilot training course on Statistics for Policy Makers was delivered to participants from a range of government agencies in South Australia. The course was delivered in five 90-minute modules, and used the policy cycle in the Australian Policy Handbook as the guide. There was a particular focus on the use of data to inform the policy analysis and evaluation stages of the process.

In addition, the ABS conducts seminars which are tailored for particular clients. For example, information sessions on ABS Confidentialised Unit Record Files, Information Skills Programs and Information Consultancy were conducted for a number of agencies. The aim of the sessions was to raise awareness of ABS statistics and services for statistical problem solving.

Table 10.2: National Statistical Training Institute training courses conducted in 2006–07 for users of ABS statistics

Course	Number of participants from other agencies
Analysing Survey Data Made Simple (previously Basic Statistical Analysis)	102
Basic Survey Design	40
Introduction to Labour Statistics	72
Making Quality Informed Decisions	65
Principles of Questionnaire Design	56
Turning Data into Information	336
Understanding Demographic Data	14
Using ABS Datacubes in Supertable	20

Statistical Clearing House

The Statistical Clearing House (SCH) was established in response to a recommendation in 1996 by the Small Business Deregulation Task Force. Their report recommended that a central clearance process be established for business surveys conducted by the Australian Government. The purpose of the process was to ensure that surveys are necessary, well designed and place minimum burden on business respondents. As such, all surveys that are directed to fifty or more businesses and that are conducted by or on behalf of any Australian Government agency (including the ABS), are subject to clearance by the SCH. In view of its statistical expertise and statutory coordination role, the ABS was empowered to administer the clearance process.

The SCH pays particular attention to eliminating duplication in business surveys, and ensures that surveys conducted follow good statistical methodologies and practices.

Table 10.3 presents the number of survey reviews at various stages of completion for 2006–07. Throughout the year, 107 reviews were completed and all were approved to proceed. The SCH continued to improve surveys, with improvements made in 28 per cent of reviews and provider load being decreased in 15 per cent of surveys.

Table 10.3 Statistical Clearing House—status of reviews for statistical collections, 2006–07

	Completed	In progress
ABS	25	9
Other	82	7
Total	107	16

Table 10.4: Statistical Clearing House—completed reviews of statistical collections

Year	ABS	Other	Total
2001–02	38	77	115
2002–03	52	117	169
2003–04	33	87	120
2004–05	33	83	116
2005–06	29	89	118
2006–07	25	82	107

The SCH Australian Government Business Surveys Register (www.nss.gov.au/nss/home.nsf/pages/About+SCH) provides access to information on collections that have already been conducted. It also includes information on survey design standards and best practices for organisations developing surveys.

CHAPTER 11

Provider/respondent relationships

Introduction

The work of the ABS would not be possible without the continuing cooperation of those in business, householders and others who provide the data that form the basis of the statistics produced. The ABS works hard to secure the trust and confidence of data providers, without which the provision of a quality statistical service would be jeopardised. The ABS continues its endeavours to reduce the burden placed on data providers by expanding the use of administrative data.

ABS service charters

The ABS recognises its obligation to respondents in statistical collections, and has produced service charters relating to both business surveys and household surveys. In addition, the ABS has a Client Services Charter for users of its products and services. For more information on the Client Services Charter see Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics. The charters include performance standards for the relationship between the ABS and its clients, and for service delivery. Performance against these standards is subject to ongoing review, as are the charters themselves.

Business Surveys Charter

The Business Surveys Charter sets out the relationship between the ABS and businesses which provide information for statistical purposes. The charter explains how businesses can seek help from the ABS, and also specifies how businesses can request a review of the handling of any complaints.

The charter is regularly reviewed and is available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au). The charter is provided to new respondents in collections involving businesses, and is produced in English, Italian, Vietnamese, Greek, Chinese and Arabic.

Household Surveys Charter

The Household Surveys Charter sets out the relationship between the ABS and members of the public who provide information for statistical purposes about themselves and their household. The charter explains what people can expect when dealing with the ABS and ABS interviewers. The charter includes information on the way household surveys are conducted, the way complaints are handled, and invites comments and feedback.

The charter, available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au), is produced in English, Italian, Vietnamese, Greek, Chinese and Arabic.

Confidentiality of data

The ABS depends on the goodwill and cooperation of Australians, businesses and other organisations to provide information in response to its many data collections. A critical way of maintaining such cooperation and goodwill is by ensuring that the information supplied remains confidential. The ABS has an enviable reputation for the preservation of the secrecy of reported information, and for the protection of its statistical data holdings from unauthorised release.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires the ABS to publish and disseminate compilations and analyses of statistical information, and to maintain the confidentiality of information collected under the Act. The ABS meets the confidentiality requirements of the Act by ensuring that information provided is:

- ◆ securely maintained
- ◆ only used for statistical purposes
- ◆ not inadvertently revealed in any published statistics, and
- ◆ used only in unidentifiable microdata files when supporting research and analysis.

A statement outlining the importance of confidentiality of data provided, and how the ABS protects the confidentiality of data, is available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au) under Survey Participant Information— How the ABS Keeps Your Information Confidential.

The Census of Population and Housing is undertaken every five years, and the fifteenth census was conducted on 8 August 2006. As with all collections undertaken by the ABS, members of the public were made aware of the confidentiality measures being taken and they were reassured that their privacy would be maintained.

In the 2006 Census, Australians were able to elect to have their name-identified census data microfilmed and stored by the National Archives of Australia for release in August 2105. More than 11 million people (or 57 per cent of respondents) elected to archive their information.

Provider load

In order to fulfil its mission of providing information to support discussion, debate and decision making, the ABS is authorised to collect information about a range of issues from businesses and households. The ABS is conscious that the needs of users for information must be balanced against the extent of requests for information from businesses and households. The amount of time needed to complete ABS surveys, totalled for all collections and all respondents, is referred to as provider load.

The ABS endeavours to minimise provider load by promoting efficiency and effectiveness of ABS operations. Information is not requested unless the collection is of high priority for the national statistical program. To further reduce provider load, forms are carefully designed and thoroughly tested. For business surveys, there is close liaison with representative groups, in relation to both the survey program and the demands on businesses.

Provider load in business surveys

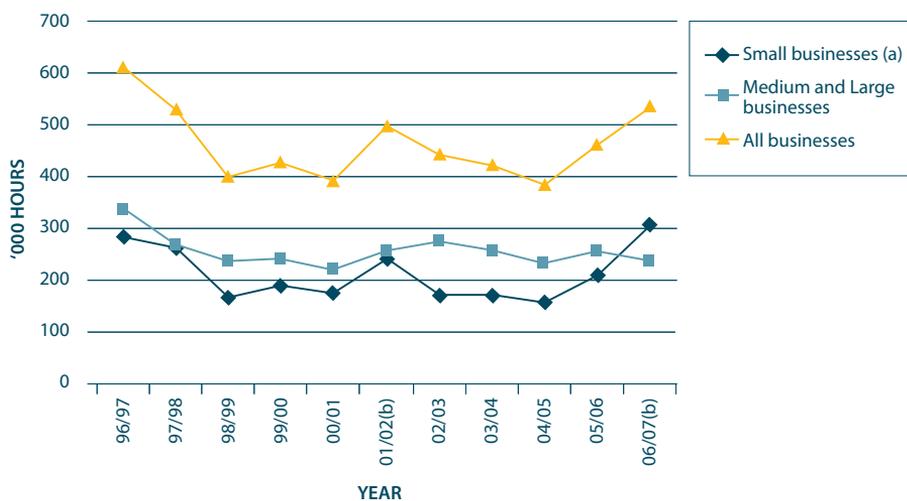
The ABS has been involved in the Australian Government’s Taskforce on Reducing the Regulatory Burden on Business, and has considered the recommendations. The taskforce report did not have any recommendations specific to the ABS, and acknowledged the value of the ABS’ role as a clearing house for Australian Government surveys. More information on the Statistical Clearing House can be found in Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics.

As seen in Graph 11.1, following the recommendations made by the Australian Government’s 1996 Small Business Deregulation Task Force (which found that the ABS only accounted for about 1 per cent of total business compliance costs), in 2004–05, the total ABS provider load on businesses fell to its lowest level of 393 000 hours. In the last two years, overall provider load has increased, due, in part, to the conduct of irregular collections. For example, the Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours, the Natural Resource Management Survey, and the Agricultural Census, with a load of around 150 000 hours, are irregular collections.

The average total load on all businesses during the past five years has been around 450 000 hours per year—27 per cent lower than for 1996–97. For small businesses, the average total load during the past five years has been around 200 000 hours per year—29 per cent lower than in 1996–97.

Graph 11.1 shows the unadjusted provider load (measured in thousands of hours taken to complete statistical forms) imposed on businesses by the ABS for 1996–97 through to 2006–07.

Graph 11.1: Unadjusted provider load imposed on businesses by the ABS

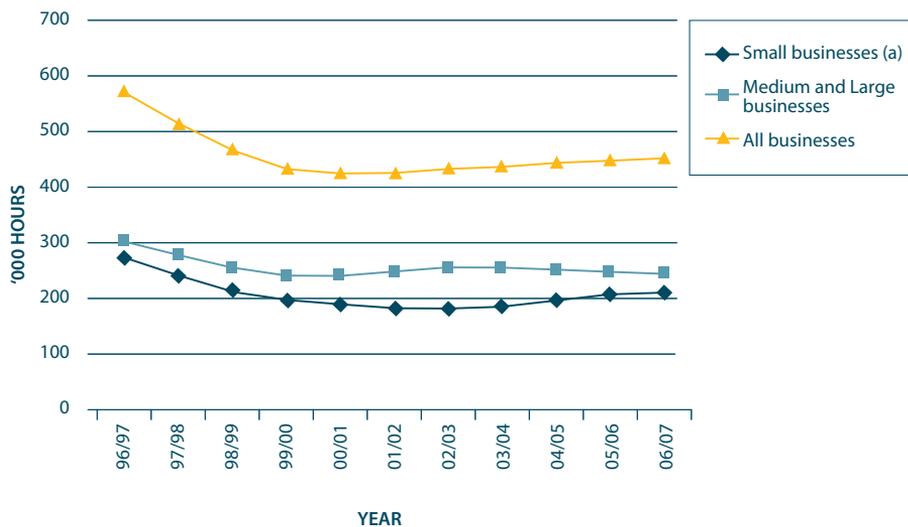


- (a) Defined as businesses with less than twenty employees or a derived estimate of employees of less than twenty
- (b) Higher provider load estimates for 2001–02 and 2006–07 reflect the conduct of the five-yearly Agricultural Census

For the first time since 1997–98, provider load for small businesses increased in 2006–07 to a level higher than medium and large businesses combined. This was due to the conduct of the five-yearly Agricultural Census, where 90 per cent of the total load for that collection was undertaken by small businesses.

Provider load figures from 1997–98 to 2006–07 were smoothed using an eleven-term Henderson moving average to reveal the underlying direction. This smooths the effect of irregular and regular contributors to provider load, such as the five-yearly Agricultural Census. Since 2002–03, the smoothed provider load estimates have increased only slightly for businesses of all sizes, as shown in Graph 11.2.

Graph 11.2: Smoothed provider load imposed on businesses by the ABS



(a) Defined as businesses with less than twenty employees or a derived estimate of employees of less than twenty

Provider load in household surveys

Table 11.1 shows household provider load over the last four years. The household survey program varies considerably from year to year, with many major surveys on 3–6 year cycles. The ABS recognises the need to balance the pressure to expand the household survey program to meet the need for information about the population, with the load on providers, and has a range of measures in place to minimise provider load.

All ABS household surveys are rigorously tested to ensure they can be completed as accurately and quickly as possible; the minimum sample size to achieve reliable results is used; and the sample design is such that dwellings cannot be selected in more than one survey in a five-year period. For example, a dwelling selected in the Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey cannot be selected in the Time Use Survey in the five-year period.

The ABS focuses on developing the professionalism of the ABS interviewers, and building their skills in obtaining information from residents, with the minimum inconvenience. ABS interviewers are trained to be flexible, organise interview times that are most suitable for respondents, and enter responses in a computer in an efficient manner.

Table 11.1: Household provider load—approximate financial year data

Year	Survey	Achieved interview time (minutes)	Total fully responding households	Total provider load (household hours)
2003–04	Monthly Population Survey (MPS)(a)(b)	6.7	363 592	40 601
	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers	43.4	14 323	10 360
	Household Expenditure Survey (HES)	111.6	6957	12 940
	Survey of Income and Housing (supplementary sample to HES)	50.7	4404	3721
	Total		389 276	67 623
2004–05	MPS(a)(b)	7.0	363 018	42 352
	Multi-Purpose Household Survey (MPHS)	8.5	14 522	2057
	National Health Survey	40.0	19 502	13 001
	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) (Non-Remote)	57.8	3325	3203
	Total		400 367	60 614
2005–06	MPS(a)	6.3	367 705	38 609
	MPHS	10.6	14 234	2514
	General Social Survey	45.3	13 404	10 120
	Personal Safety Survey	27.9	16 430	7640
	Survey of Education and Training	36.3	13 857	8383
	Survey of Income and Housing	39.6	10 158	6704
	Total		435 814	70 299
2006–07	MPS—July 06 to May 07(a)	7.1	345 093	40 951
	MPHS—9 months only to May 07	13.8	12 483	2873
	Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation	43.9	8347	6107
	Adult Literacy and Life Skills	101.9	7406	12 578
	Time Use Survey	39.2	3936	2572
	Post Enumeration Survey	35.7	32 731	19 475
	Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children	74.5	9062	11 252
	Survey of Income and Housing	39.9	10 156	6754
	Total		442 587	112 457

(a) Includes the Labour Force Survey

(b) Full implementation of Computer Assisted Interviewing (CAI) for MPS occurred in August 2004, January to July figures include Pen and Paper Interviewing (PAPI) and CAI combined average

Provider load in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Design of the census form is a critical strategy for maintaining a minimum provider load in the census. Forms are designed to be completed by one or more residents in each household, and there is a focus on ensuring provider load is kept to a minimum by:

- ◆ clearly showing the questions that are applicable to each member of the household, and
- ◆ focus group testing questions to ensure they are suitable for self-enumeration.

The 2006 Census saw the introduction of the eCensus, an online facility which respondents could use to return their census information. To minimise provider load, the eCensus only displayed questions relevant to an individual, whilst indicating the questions that were being missed.

The 2006 Census form, when compared to the 2001 form, increased by ten questions, in response to high user demand for topics.

Table 11.2 shows the average time taken to complete either a paper form or electronic form. For the paper form, this represents findings from testing of the census form, as time taken to self-enumerate is not measured during the census itself.

Table 11.2: Census provider load

Time taken on average (minutes)	2001 Census	2006 Census
To complete a paper form	21.8	30.4(a)
To complete an eCensus form	n/a	41.13(b)

- a) For the paper form, the time taken for the 2006 Census is based on results from the 2004 major test, 22.9 minutes, plus an estimated 7.5 minutes for the additional ten questions included after the major test
- b) The time taken for the eCensus includes login times as well as the time taken to answer questions, across all sessions

Response rates

The ABS has had consistently high response rates for both household and business surveys. Table 11.3 shows that response rates for selected business collections has been consistently maintained.

It is important to note that in regard to business surveys, follow up procedures tend to focus on the more significant businesses. That is, those with typically high sales or employment relative to the rest of the industry. For example, the response rate for businesses in the manufacturing survey might be 92 per cent, but the businesses that have responded may comprise 96 per cent of the total employment in the industry.

Table 11.3 also demonstrates the continuing high levels of response gained for household surveys. Maintaining high response rates is a major focus for the household survey program, particularly given the increasing number of interviews that are conducted during the limited evening hours (up to 8 pm).

Table 11.3: Response rates for selected surveys

	Response rate 2005–06 (%) ^(a)	Response rate 2006–07 (%) ^(a)
Business surveys		
Retail Business Survey	97	97
Economic Activity Survey	91	93
Quarterly Business Indicators Survey	91	91
Manufacturing Survey	90	90
Survey of Tourist Accommodation	93	93
Agricultural Census	88 ^(b)	92
Survey of International Trade in Services	93	96
Survey of Research and Experimental Development— Business	94	91
Household surveys		
Labour Force Survey	96	97
Multi-purpose Household Survey ^(c)	88	82
Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation	87 ^(d)	82
Adult Literacy and Life Skills	85 ^(e)	78
Time Use Survey	72 ^(f)	69
Post Enumeration Survey	96 ^(g)	94
Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children	na ^(h)	91

a) Average response rates over the year for sub-annual surveys. Response rates apply to the year in which the data is collected

b) The previous Agricultural Census was conducted in 2001

c) The results for the Multipurpose Household Survey are used in several ABS publications. The survey is enumerated monthly and the response rates are a simple average

d) The previous Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation was conducted as the Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation in 2000

e) The previous Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey was conducted as the Adult Literacy Survey in 1996

f) The previous Time Use Survey was conducted in 1997

g) The previous Post Enumeration Survey was conducted in 2001

h) This survey was first enumerated in 2006.

The census consistently has very high response rates. These response rates are generally maintained despite usual collection problems and some new difficulties faced in 2006, such as more access problems because of a greater number of secure premises, and issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of census collectors, who were more difficult to attract and retain in times of low unemployment.

The completeness and the accuracy of the census is measured by a separate survey conducted specifically for this purpose—the census Post Enumeration Survey (PES). For more information on this survey see Chapter 5 Population and Social Statistics Program.

The PES is a household survey conducted about 3 weeks after census night. The results of the PES are used to determine how many people were missed in the census, and how many were counted more than once.

A number of improvements were implemented in the 2006 PES. Some of these include:

- ◆ expanding the scope of the PES to include remote areas and discrete Indigenous communities
- ◆ the use of a computer assisted interviewing instrument to replace the paper questionnaire previously used for the PES
- ◆ a more computerised match-and-search system for processing the PES data, and
- ◆ an improved estimation method.

For the 2006 Census, the PES identified a net undercount of 2.7 per cent, which is an increase compared to the 1.8 per cent net undercount from the 2001 Census. Care should be taken when comparing 2006 estimates with previous years, due to changes made to PES estimation and because of the inclusion of remote areas and discrete Indigenous communities for the first time in the 2006 PES.

More information on the PES is available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au) in *Information Paper: Measuring Net Undercount in the 2006 Population Census, 2007* (cat. no. 2940.0.55.001) and *Census of Population and Housing—Undercount, 2006* (cat. no. 2940.0).

Complaints from providers/respondents

Over 200 000 businesses and around 400 000 households are selected in ABS surveys each year. Households or businesses have a number of avenues available if they have queries or complaints about being selected in a survey, or about the processes involved. Free call contact numbers are provided with all survey information (preliminary approach letters and brochures for household surveys; survey forms and brochures for business surveys). Respondents can call these numbers and, for the majority of cases, their concerns are resolved by the ABS officers receiving the calls.

The census involved every person in Australia, and contact numbers were provided in all census material. People called these numbers for answers to queries they had, and to discuss any concerns.

In addition, there are a range of other complaint mechanisms, which can be used by households and businesses, including writing to or emailing the ABS, writing to the ABS Complaints Review Officer, approaching a parliamentarian, or contacting the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Information about the first two avenues is shown in the Table 11.4.

Table 11.4: Written complaints from respondents in ABS surveys

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Complaints to the ABS survey areas						
Business surveys	550	427	397	300	360	290
Letters to politicians (ministerial correspondence)						
Household surveys	6	8	10	15	14	15
Business surveys	16	20	6	7	9	11
Census(a)	–(b)	–	–	–	–	85

(a) The Census of Population and Housing is conducted every five years

(b) Information is not available for 2001–02

In 2006–07, the number of ministerials received for household surveys was around the same level as the number received in 2005–06. As household surveys are conducted by interviewers, either by phone or in person, most questions and complaints are dealt with directly and informally by survey staff, and do not result in formal written complaints.

ABS business surveys are predominately mail-based and the number of written complaints is noticeably higher than for household surveys. In 2006–07, a total of 290 businesses wrote to the ABS with a complaint. Many written complaints received from businesses relate to requests for exemption from ABS business surveys. In 2006–07, forty-eight requests from businesses for temporary exemption from ABS surveys were granted. As outlined in the ABS Business Surveys Charter, every complaint is responded to, either in writing or by telephone. If the complainant is not satisfied with the ABS response, they can take the matter to the Complaints Review Officer. During 2006–07 there were no complaints made about business surveys to the ABS Complaints Review Officer, and there were three inquiries from the office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

The number of written complaints declined in 2006–07. This reduction is attributed to the high profile of the ABS, with the additional media coverage associated with the 2006 Census and the Agricultural Census, and an increased number of respondent concerns resolved by ABS officers on the telephone.

Notices of direction and prosecution actions

Under sections 10(4) and 11(2) of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the Australian Statistician may, by notice in writing, direct a person to complete a form or answer a question. Under section 14 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, a person commits an offence if they fail to comply with a notice of direction. The penalty for this is set at one penalty unit (\$110 in 2006–07) in respect of each day until the person complies with the direction. The application of this penalty is at the discretion of the court.

These provisions are used sparingly, as the ABS prefers to seek the willing cooperation of respondents. However, it is sometimes necessary to use the legislative provisions, to ensure that high response rates are maintained and the data provided are high quality.

The number of notices of direction issued and the number of prosecution actions approved in recent years are shown in Table 11.5

In 2006–07, the number of notices of direction issued for household surveys has increased. This has resulted from an increased focus on non-compliance. The ABS has a set of criteria to consider when deciding to issue a notice of direction for a household survey. This approach is reducing the instances of non-compliance and none of the eighty-six notices of direction to households proceeded to prosecution.

Whilst there is a high level of cooperation from business survey providers, both the number of notices of direction issued and the number of prosecution actions approved increased in 2006–07 from 2005–06 levels, reflecting the conduct of the 2006 Census, and a focus by the ABS on further improving business compliance.

The number of notices of direction and prosecution actions approved is higher every five years, when the Census of Population and Housing is conducted. Table 11.5 shows a substantial increase for 2006–07, compared to 2001–02, when the 2001 Census was conducted. This increase came about as a result of improved processes and procedures following evaluation of the 2001 Census. These improvements included streamlining this aspect of census operation, more efficient notification systems for census field staff, and quicker turn-around times for taking action.

Table 11.5: Notices of direction issued and prosecution actions approved

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Notices of direction issued						
Census of Population and Housing	595	–	–	–	–	4955
Population Statistics Group including household surveys	13	1	–	1	8	86
Economic Statistics Group including business censuses and surveys	21	23	1	–	4	19
Total	629	24	1	1	12	5060
Prosecution actions approved(a)						
Census of Population and Housing	104	–	–	–	–	253
Population Statistics Group including household surveys	2	–	–	–	–	–
Economic Statistics Group including business censuses and surveys	–	1	–	–	1	5
Total	106	1	–	–	1	258

(a) Approved by the Australian Statistician for referral to the relevant office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Any particular prosecution approval may pertain to a number of notices of direction. Each prosecution action approval is counted in the year in which the corresponding notices of direction are issued. Not every prosecution action approved proceeds to court

CHAPTER 12

Quality and timeliness

Introduction

The quality of statistics produced by ABS is critical to ensuring the ABS achieves its mission of assisting and encouraging informed decision making. The ABS strives to maximise the quality of the information it produces, taking account of budgetary constraints and the load placed on survey respondents.

Integrity

The ABS aims to produce high-quality statistics that can be used with confidence. It also aims to exercise the highest professional standards in all aspects of its statistical operations, and recognises that a quality culture is fundamental to maintaining the trust of the Australian community.

The ABS goes to considerable lengths to ensure its data, analysis and interpretation are objective, and always publishes its statistics in ways that explain and inform, without advocating a particular position.

The ABS regularly reviews the methodologies used to produce statistics, providing the opportunity to make improvements and incorporate new approaches, where appropriate. For example, the methodology used for the Census Post Enumeration Survey was reviewed to ensure that the population estimates produced following the 2006 Census of Population and Housing are as accurate as possible. *Information Paper: Measuring Net Undercount in the 2006 Population Census, 2007* (cat. no. 2940.0.55.001) was released in May 2007, describing the methodology used for this process, prior to the first releases of census data.

The ABS statistical system is open to outside scrutiny. Its methodologies are based on sound statistical principles and practices, and are disseminated widely. The Methodological Advisory Committee meets twice every year and consists of professional statisticians external to the ABS, who provide peer review of methodological developments in the ABS. In addition, a range of research papers are published to explain statistical developments and research. Topics covered in the past year included: improvements to times series analysis methods, improving household survey designs and enhanced use of information to monitor survey progress, assessing the quality of analytical products, and new analyses such as estimating average annual hours worked.

The ABS works to continuously improve the quality of its statistical processes. During 2006–07, the ABS reviewed its approach to quality-assuring the processing of statistical information, and has commenced implementing a range of measures aimed at reducing the incidence of statistical errors.

DID YOU KNOW?

Recycling for all types of waste in Australia has grown over the past twenty years, increasing by 825 per cent between 1996–97 and 2002–03.

Source: *Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends, 2006* (cat. no. 4613.0)

Aspects of quality

To ensure the production of high-quality statistics, quality monitoring is an integral part of the process. The following aspects of quality are examined in this chapter:

- ◆ **Relevance**—the degree to which information meets the needs of users
- ◆ **Accuracy**—the degree to which the information correctly describes the phenomena being measured
- ◆ **Timeliness**—the delay between the reference period and the release of the information
- ◆ **Accessibility**—the ease with which the information can be referenced
- ◆ **Interpretability**—the availability of supplementary information necessary to interpret the statistical information, and
- ◆ **Coherence**—the degree to which the information can be brought together with other information, now and over time.

Addressing the quality of a statistical product will always involve balancing these aspects. For example, initiatives that could improve the accuracy of the statistics may reduce the timeliness or relevance. The ABS must also work within its budget, and find the right balance between achieving high-quality statistical information and collecting an appropriate range of statistics.

The ABS aims to produce a large and diverse range of statistics, with a quality designed to meet the key needs of researchers, policy makers and other users within the Australian community. The ABS also strives to ensure that the users of its information are provided with readily accessible information on quality, so they can make informed decisions on the suitability of the statistics for their intended use. This information is available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au), and the ABS is currently looking into ways of making this information more visible to users of its statistics.

The changing environment, in particular the increased importance of the ABS website as the main dissemination source of its statistics, has introduced new challenges and opportunities for improvement on ways the ABS can better ensure that end users have relevant, accessible and quality information to guide their use of the statistics. The ABS endorses the principle that the quality of the data should be described clearly. Work has commenced on producing

statements on the quality of statistical outputs that have been written specifically for web-based dissemination. The statements will describe the quality of a statistical release using the six dimensions of the ABS data quality framework, as listed above.

Relevance

The relevance of statistical information reflects the degree to which it meets the needs of the users of the information, and of concern is whether the available information addresses the issues that are most important to researchers and policy makers, and to the broader Australian community. The outputs produced, the concepts and classifications used, and the scope of the collection can all affect the relevance of the data.

A detailed understanding of the users of statistical information and their requirements is an important part of the statistical process, and the ABS has a range of mechanisms in place to achieve this, including advisory groups such as the Australian Statistics Advisory Council. A range of other groups and mechanisms, which the ABS uses to communicate with the users of statistics, are described in Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics.

For particular surveys, key stakeholders are identified and consulted before and during the survey development. Further, each survey is regularly evaluated to assess the degree to which it meets user requirements. Information Development Plans are reviewed regularly for each area of statistics, bridging the gaps between user requirements and statistical outputs.

Other specialised reviews are also conducted regularly, for example, future directions in regional statistics and priorities for information technology statistics.

The ABS continues to refine its products to ensure they remain relevant. For example, during 2006–07, the ABS commenced implementing a revised classification of industry, *Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, 2006* (cat. no. 1292.0), which will enable ABS statistics to better reflect the economy in the real world.

Accuracy

The accuracy of statistical information is the degree to which the information correctly describes the phenomena it was designed to measure. Most statistics produced by the ABS are obtained from a sample of households or businesses. This process results in some uncertainty as to the accuracy of the estimates published. For example, the estimate from the sample may not be the same as would have been obtained if information had been collected from the whole population. This is known as sampling error. There are also other sources of error that potentially cause inaccuracy, including the level of non-response, the magnitude of revisions made as additional information is received, and errors from other parts of the collection process (non-sampling error). The ABS aims to inform users about the accuracy of statistics and enable them to assess whether the accuracy of the data will be sufficient to meet their needs.

Information about accuracy

As users will want to use statistical information for different purposes, it is important to make information available to enable them to make their own assessment of the quality.

Descriptions of accuracy, as well as extensive information on the statistical methods used in collections, are routinely provided in concepts, sources and methods publications, the explanatory notes in publications, and through the Statistical Clearing House via the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au).

In addition, major changes to methodology are explained in feature articles or information papers, such as a feature article on a new methodology for estimating the number of persons in the labour force in *Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics, May 2007* (cat. no. 6292.0), and a new methodology for compiling the established house price index in *House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities, March 2007* (cat. no. 6146.0).

DID YOU KNOW?

Australia's population reached 20 852 000 at 31 December 2006 (up 1.4 per cent or 293 100 people since 31 December 2005).

Source: *Australian Demographic Statistics, Dec 2006* (cat. no. 3101.0)

The ABS has made few significant mistakes in the statistics it has released. On the infrequent occasions when substantial processing errors are found, it is ABS policy to publish corrected data as soon as possible. Instances where an error has resulted in a release being reissued in 2006–07 include:

- ◆ *Building Approvals, Australia, February 2007* (cat. no. 8731.0), which had to be reissued because two tables in the hard copy publication contained data from a previous reference month
- ◆ *Forms of Employment, Australia, November 2006* (cat. no. 6359.0), which was reissued because it contained incorrect data in some of the tables, and
- ◆ *Australian National Accounts: State Accounts* (cat. no. 5220.0), which was reissued after an error was detected that impacted on the volume growth rates for gross state product for Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

For the State Accounts release, as soon as the error was found, action was taken to advise all state treasuries and the media that the publication would be reissued, and it was subsequently reissued on the next working day.

To ensure the continued high level of accuracy of ABS statistics, the ABS continues to implement reviews and risk-mitigation strategies to ensure that processes are examined and any weaknesses identified are addressed.

Non-sampling error

Non-sampling error is a general term that describes all sources of error other than the error introduced by the sampling process. Sampling error can be measured by using the mathematical properties of the selected sample. Non-sampling error is much harder to measure.

Some sources of non-sampling error that are most relevant to statistical surveys include: non-response error; errors in identifying and contacting the population of interest for a survey; errors introduced by the questionnaire design, such as misunderstanding or inadvertently missing questions, or phrasing questions that predispose a respondent to answer in a particular way; and data capture, processing and coding errors.

The ABS minimises the impact of non-sampling errors by use of best practice procedures in questionnaire design, interview procedures, data validation and repair, and processing. Any significant changes to questionnaire wording or data collection methods are carefully trialled and evaluated before they are implemented.

Sampling error

The relative standard error (RSE) is a measure of the sampling error associated with an estimate. The magnitude of standard errors varies between collections and between data items within a collection due to factors such as the responding sample size and the nature of the data item. The RSE is a useful indicator for comparing the accuracy of estimates between surveys. Table 12.1 presents a summary view of the estimated RSEs for key statistics from a number of major ABS surveys. Further detailed information is included with each ABS publication, as well as in the concepts, sources and methods publications released by the ABS.

RSEs are affected by the size of the sample used, the sample design used for the survey, and by the underlying variability of the indicator in the population.

Sample size influences the level of accuracy that can be attained. For example, the accuracy of estimates from the Labour Force Survey varies between states and territories. To have the same level of accuracy, identical sample sizes would be required for all states and territories. The sample sizes between states vary, for example, the sample size for the New South Wales estimates is greater than the sample size for Northern Territory estimates. Hence the estimated RSEs for total employed persons in Australia is lower than any of the individual state estimates, and the estimated RSE for total employed persons in New South Wales is lower than the estimated RSE for total employed persons in the Northern Territory.

ABS sample designs for business surveys use groups of similar businesses (strata) as the basis for sample selection to improve the efficiency of estimation. Information such as employment size or annual sales can be used in this grouping. Many indicators, such as annual turnover or value of building work done, are closely related to the variables used in stratification, allowing these indicators to be estimated with relatively high accuracy. Other variables, such as capital expenditure or job vacancies, are not as closely related, and so cannot be estimated with the same accuracy.

As well as differences between surveys, the RSE can also change with time for any given survey. These changes may be due to changes in the way the survey is conducted, for example, changes in the sample size or the method of producing estimates, or changes in the population being studied, such as a change in the prevalence of a particular characteristic.

Greater accuracy was achieved for the labour forces estimates in 2007 due to an improved estimation methodology. Analysis of historical data showed that at the Australia level, for seasonally adjusted estimates, employment estimates were 0.07 per cent lower on average and unemployment estimates were 1.6 per cent lower on average, under the new estimator than under the previous estimator. For more information see Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics, May 2007 (cat. no. 6292.0).

The RSE for job vacancies is relatively large due to the underlying variability. That is, the number of job vacancies can vary considerably from business to business—and for any business it can vary considerably from month to month. Therefore, a very large sample would be required to measure job vacancies with high precision. In the table below, the estimated RSE for job vacancies for 2005–06 of 5.6 per cent is around the same as the estimated RSE for job vacancies for 2004–05 of 5.5 per cent.

Table 12.1: Relative standard errors (RSEs) for selected indicators(a)

Publication	Indicator	RSE (%)
Economic indicators		
<i>Retail Trade, Australia</i> (cat. no. 8501.0)	Total turnover for the retail industry, Australia	0.8
<i>Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia</i> (cat. no. 5625.0)	Actual private new capital expenditure, Australia	1.0
<i>Business Indicators, Australia</i> (cat. no. 5676.0)	Company gross operating profit, Australia	1.7
<i>Building Activity, Australia</i> (cat. no. 8752.0)	Value of building work done, Australia	0.6
<i>Average Weekly Earnings, Australia</i> (cat. no. 6302.0)	Full-time adult ordinary time earnings, Australia	0.8
<i>Job Vacancies, Australia</i> (cat. no. 6354.0)	Job vacancies, Australia	5.6
Social indicators		
<i>Labour Force Survey</i> (cat. no. 6202.0)	Total number of persons employed (aged 15 years and over), Australia	0.7
<i>Personal Safety Survey</i> (cat. no. 4906.0)	Total number of persons who experienced harassment in the last 12 months, Australia	2.1
<i>Education and Work</i> (cat. no. 6227.0)—monthly population survey	Total number of persons employed whose highest non-school qualification is a bachelor degree, Australia	1.3

(a) RSEs are presented for surveys conducted in respect of the 2005–06 reference period

Revisions to data

One measurable component of statistical accuracy is revisions to data made after initial publication, resulting from additional information becoming available. Revisions are generally measured by their size and frequency over time.

Revisions are applied to statistical series to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between accuracy and timeliness in the release of the statistics. Revisions could be avoided, but this would mean that either the release of statistics would be substantially delayed, or that the statistics could not be improved by making use of any new or better sources of data that become available. The ABS aims to maximise the overall quality of the released statistics by publishing accurate statistics in a timely manner, while subsequently improving the accuracy through revisions as new data become available. It is also ABS policy to inform users of any significant revisions and, where appropriate, to revise past time series and advise users accordingly.

The tables below provide, for two key series, the mean revision and the mean absolute revision for the past seven years. The mean revision shows the percentage difference between the first estimate published, and that estimate one year later, averaged over the four quarters for the year. The mean absolute revision shows the average absolute values of the mean revision.

Table 12.2 describes the revisions to quarterly gross domestic product (GDP). In particular, it shows the difference between the first estimate of GDP and that estimate one year later, in terms of the mean revision and the mean absolute revision expressed as percentage points. The figures continue to show that revisions to quarterly GDP in recent years remain relatively small (mean absolute revision). Zero mean revision figures indicate that the revisions to quarterly GDP over the year have been offsetting. Despite the revisions to quarterly GDP being quite small, efforts to further improve the estimates are ongoing.

Table 12.2: Revisions to quarterly gross domestic product, percentage change(a)

Reference year	Difference between first estimate and estimate one year later	
	Mean absolute revision (% points)	Mean revision (% points)
1999–2000	0.1	–
2000–01	0.2	–
2001–02	0.2	–
2002–03	0.1	–
2003–04	0.2	0.2
2004–05	0.1	–
2005–06(b)	0.2	–

(a) Seasonally adjusted chain volume measure

(b) First three quarters of 2005–06 only

Mean absolute revisions to the quarterly current account transactions since 1999–2000 are shown in Table 12.3. The revisions to the current account deficit are expressed in percentage terms, rather than percentage points, as is the case with the revisions to GDP.

Table 12.3: Revisions to quarterly current account transactions(a)

Reference year	Difference between first estimate and estimate one year later	
	Mean absolute revision (%)	Mean revision (%)
1999–2000	2.3	0.3
2000–01	3.4	–0.3
2001–02	2.7	–0.1
2002–03	1.8	–0.5
2003–04	1.2	0.3
2004–05	1.7	0.7
2005–06(b)	2.5	–0.3

(a) Seasonally adjusted data

(b) First three quarters of 2005–06 only

Timeliness

The timeliness of statistical information can be measured by the gap between the reference period (the period the data relate to) and the date of release of results. The ABS continues to adhere to pre-announced release dates and make improvements, where possible, to the timeliness achieved. Tables 12.4 and 12.5 present information on the timeliness for ABS monthly and quarterly tabular data for main economic indicator statistics, and other general releases. Table 12.6 reports on the timeliness of Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs).

The high standard of timely release of statistical tables was maintained in 2006–07. The greatest change since last year has been the improvement in timeliness for other general tabular statistics.

Table 12.4: Time between end of reference period and release of tabular data (average number of elapsed days)(a)

Year of release	Main economic indicator tabular statistics		Other general tabular releases	
	Monthly	Quarterly	Monthly	Quarterly
2001–02	29	51	34	78
2002–03	28	49	33	74
2003–04	29	51	26	85
2004–05	29	51	25	75
2005–06	30	52	24	87
2006–07	31	51	22	83

(a) Where a publication or spreadsheet has been reissued, the reissue date is used in the calculation of average

Table 12.5: Time between end of reference period and release of tabular data for selected publications

Publication	Frequency	Average number of elapsed days(a)
<i>Retail Trade, Australia</i> (cat. no. 8501.0)	Monthly	33
<i>Building Approvals, Australia</i> (cat. no. 8731.0)	Monthly	35
<i>Labour Force, Australia</i> (cat. no. 6202.0)	Monthly	10
<i>Consumer Price Index, Australia</i> (cat. no. 6401.0)	Quarterly	25
<i>Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product</i> (cat. no. 5206.0)	Quarterly	69
<i>Australian Demographic Statistics</i> (cat. no. 3101.0)	Quarterly	170

(a) Average is taken over the most recent year's releases

The timeliness of release of information depends on a number of factors, including the amount and complexity of information being collected, the source of the data (for example, whether directly collected or sourced from administrative records), and the amount of processing or validation of the information required before release.

For example, labour force statistics are released very quickly after the end of the reference month. Part of the explanation for this is that the data collection is completed before the end of the reference month. In contrast, for demographic statistics on Australia's population, the quarterly changes to population statistics are based on a variety of administrative sources, such as registrations of births and deaths, passenger cards completed at Australia's borders, and modelled estimates of interstate migration (using information from Medicare card registration address changes, delayed by three months as registration often takes place after the actual move). It takes around five months before estimates can be published due to the time needed to acquire and process the administrative data, particularly with the delay of three months for the Medicare card data.

The elapsed time between the end of the reference period and the supply of the CURF data has improved significantly in recent years, as can be seen by the average number of elapsed days in Table 12.6. The number of CURF releases is related to a survey topic and may include both basic and expanded CURFs counted as a single release. More information on CURFs can be found in Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics. As 2006–07 information is unavailable, Table 12.6 presents information for the previous year.

Table 12.6: Time between end of reference period and release of CURFs

Reference year	Number of CURFs released	Average number of elapsed days
2002–03	5	724
2003–04	2	548
2004–05	7	375
2005–06(a)	5	332

(a) As at 30 June 2007: Further microdata from the 2005–06 reference year are expected to be made available in the second half of 2007, which will increase the total number of 2005–06 CURFs released, and increase the average number of elapsed days

Accessibility

The accessibility of statistical information refers to the ease with which it can be referenced. This includes the ease with which the existence of information can be ascertained, as well as the suitability of the form or medium through which the information can be accessed. The cost of the information may also be an aspect of accessibility for some users. More information on the accessibility of statistical information can be found in Chapter 13 Dissemination of statistics.

All statistics on the ABS website are now accessed free of charge. This policy was announced in December 2005. The change means that all publications, spreadsheets and census data on the website are now available without cost to any member of the public with internet access. However, people who require paper copies of publications, information on CD-ROM, or information more detailed than that published, will be charged under the ABS pricing policy.

A CURF is a product that allows approved researchers with a valid statistical purpose to access individual survey responses. The data files are confidentialised and access is carefully controlled to ensure that no individual or organisation can be identified. The ABS has worked to improve the accessibility of information available by increasing the number of CURFs released, with a milestone achieved on 22 June 2007— the release of the 100th ABS CURF (inclusive of both basic and expanded CURFs). The ABS has also continued work on improving the accessibility of CURFs through the ABS Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL™).

In assisting users to access more customised census information, the ABS released the 2006 Census Table Builder, as noted in *2006 Census of Population and Housing—Product Brief, Table Builder* (cat. no. 2065.0). Table Builder is a product that allows users to construct their own tables via an interactive web interface, using a database containing the 2006 Census Unit Record File. Users will be able to select classifications for person, family and dwelling. Table Builder will also be available via the ABS RADL™ portal.

Interpretability

The interpretability of statistical information reflects the availability of the supplementary information and metadata necessary to interpret and utilise it appropriately. This information normally covers the availability and clarity of metadata, including concepts, classifications and measures of accuracy. In addition, interpretability includes the appropriate presentation of the data in such a way that it aids in the correct interpretation of the data.

ABS releases are accompanied by extensive explanatory notes to aid the interpretation of statistical information. A range of material is also available on the ABS website detailing the methods, classifications, concepts and standards used by the ABS. During 2006–07, the *Producer and International Trade Price Indexes: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 2006* (cat. no. 6429.0) was released for the first time as a replacement to the 1995 issue of *Producer and Foreign Trade Price Indexes: Concepts, Sources and Methods, 1995* (cat. no. 6419.0).

The ABS is currently working to improve the metadata available for ABS collections. For more information see Chapter 15 Statistical standards and infrastructure.

A number of ABS publications combine, compare and contrast statistics from different sources to help users interpret how changes in one aspect of the economy or society can impact on other aspects. Examples include *Measures of Australia's Progress, 2006* (cat. no. 1370.0),

Australian Economic Indicators, July 2007 (cat. no. 1350.0) and *Australian Social Trends, 2006* (cat. no. 4102.0). For more information on these publications and other analytical work undertaken by the ABS to assist in the interpretation of statistics, see Chapter 14 Extended analysis of statistics.

Coherence

The coherence of statistical information reflects the degree to which it can be successfully brought together with other statistical information within a broad analytic framework, now and over time. Coherence encompasses the internal consistency of a collection as well as its comparability, both over time and with other data sources. The use of standard concepts, classifications and target populations promotes coherence, as does the use of common methodology across surveys.

Coherence of ABS outputs requires the use of nationally and internationally agreed concepts and classifications. Standard concepts and classifications are not only used extensively within the ABS, but also promoted to other producers of statistical information within Australia. Information on statistical standards, concepts, classifications and methodologies are readily accessible through the ABS website. For more information see Chapter 15 Statistical standards and infrastructure.

The Statistical Clearing House (SCH) provides approval to conduct surveys that are directed to fifty or more businesses and that are conducted by, or on behalf of, any Australian Government agency, to ensure that surveys are necessary, well designed, and place minimal burden on business respondents. One of the criteria used by the SCH is the coherence of the statistical information that will be produced. In particular, surveys are assessed on their use of standard methodologies, concepts and classifications, their consistency with past or future surveys, and the extent to which outputs can be compared, or jointly used, with other sources of data. For more information about the SCH see Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics.

Any changes that may impact on the coherence of ABS statistics are detailed in the explanatory notes that accompany each release. Significant changes may lead to series breaks in time series, or adjustments to past data. Occasionally situations occur that necessitate breaks being applied to the trend series. These breaks are necessary because of a change in the underlying level of the original series. An example of a recently applied series break in trend estimates can be found in *Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia, November 2005* (cat. no. 3401.0) in short-term resident departures (Indonesia), to account for the decrease in movements resulting from the Bali bombing of 1 October 2005. This break not only applied to the estimates of the individual country (ie Indonesia) but as a consequence a break was required to the regional total series (eg Total South-East Asia) and to the total series.

Further, when the Telstra Corporation was effectively privatised on 20 November 2006 (changing from public sector to private sector for the purposes for ABS statistics), this change impacted the average weekly earnings by sector series, and a series break was made in *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, February 2007* (cat. no. 6302.0). For more information on the impacts of the privatisation of the Telstra Corporation see *Future Treatment of Telstra in ABS Statistics, 2007* (cat. no. 8102.0).

CHAPTER 13

Dissemination of statistics

Introduction

During 2006–07, the ABS continued to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion by increasing accessibility to the outputs of statistical activities. Results of collections are usually released through publications, spreadsheets and datacubes. Outputs can be accessed via the ABS website, and hard copy publications are still available for some releases.

In addition, confidentialised unit record files are created for some collections and can be accessed, under strict conditions, by authorised users.

Dissemination methods are underpinned by the ABS' core value of independence and impartiality. The ABS complies with this value by:

- ◆ ensuring that all potential users have equal opportunity to access ABS statistics
- ◆ assigning products release dates and times which are publicised in the ABS Release Advice, and
- ◆ placing all releases, and the information they contain, under an embargo until the scheduled release time.

The ABS also seeks to ensure that the processes used to compile statistics are open and transparent, and the users of statistics have access to all the information that they need to be able to interpret the statistics accurately. As such, information about the methods used in producing statistics is provided through statistical publications, such as those referred to as manuals of concepts, sources and methods, and information papers. Ongoing ABS research is often published in professional papers (a full list of those presented in 2006–07 is included in the online appendices). ABS data are increasingly being presented with attendant metadata that helps clients interpret and assess the 'fitness for use' of the data.

The following sections cover some of the methods for accessing ABS statistics, new releases in 2006–07, and uses of ABS statistics.

Accessing ABS statistics

ABS website

The ABS website remains the primary access point for the majority of users of ABS information, with site users accessing ABS web pages 101 million times in 2006–07. This was an increase of 30.2 per cent from 2005–06, and it is substantially due to the change in ABS' pricing policy, which now provides free access to all statistics on the website, an increase in the number of pages available and the first release of the 2006 Census results.

During 2006–07 a number of improvements were made to the ABS website. These include:

- ◆ The topics hierarchies that are currently visible on the ABS website were expanded from a two-level hierarchy to a three-level hierarchy, as part of a redesign of the ‘Statistics by topic’ views of the website. This redesign was undertaken in response to client feedback.
- ◆ The latest national statistical headlines were upgraded to assist users in navigating the website.
- ◆ A ‘breadcrumb’ feature was added to the statistics area of the website. This new feature will make navigating the ABS website easier, as it displays the hierarchy of pages from the home page to the current screen, and allows the user to return to any point along the path by simply clicking on the link.
- ◆ The print friendly functionality has been added to content pages in the statistics area of the website.
- ◆ The first visit page was added. This is designed to assist first-time users of the ABS website to get a quick overview of what they can find on the website.

In addition, over 4000 historical publications were released to the website.

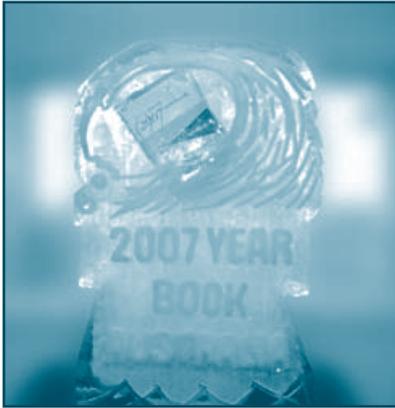
The ABS has established an electronic publication and metadata vision (evision), with an aim of increasing the use of statistics and improving understanding of the content. This will assist users in how to best utilise our statistics. For further information on ABS’ evision directions see *Data Communication—Emerging International Trends and Practices of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006* (cat. no. 1211.0).

The first product to apply the evision principles was SA Stats, September 2006 issue (cat. no. 1345.4). This product is released on a monthly basis, and provides an overview of the South Australian economy. The product adopted a layered approach to display its information and added images to enhance the look and feel of the publication. The new design was released on 29 September 2006 and was well received by users.

The ABS has now applied the evision principles to over twenty products. The vision is continually expanding to accommodate new technology and systems, and to incorporate the needs of our clients.

Promotion of releases

The ABS seeks to encourage informed and increased use of statistics by promoting key releases such as the Year Book Australia, Measures of Australia’s Progress and Australian Social Trends, as well as generally promoting the wider range of ABS products and services.



The annual Year Book, released this year on 24 January 2007, is the flagship publication of the ABS and provides a comprehensive and detailed annual statistical review of Australia



The Governor-General at Bondi Beach, launching Year Book Australia 2007

The 2006 Census was launched by the Treasurer, the Hon Peter Costello, MP. The Treasurer also launched the release of the results from the census in June 2007. At these launches, the Treasurer spoke about how the census provides a foundation picture of Australia, and how the census results are the basis of data used by governments at all levels to make planning decisions about policy and the provision of services.

The *Year Book Australia 2007* (cat. no. 1301.0) was launched at Bondi Beach in Sydney by the Governor-General as patron of Surf Life Saving Australia. The Year Book paid special tribute to surf lifesavers, who have been saving lives on Australian beaches for 100 years. The International Council for Science, in conjunction with the World Meteorological Organization, established an International Polar Year (IPY) in 2007–08, the 125th anniversary of the first polar year, and the fiftieth anniversary of the International Geophysical Year in 1957–58. To mark the IPY, the Year Book also reflected on the prominent role that Australia and Australians have played in Antarctica over the history of its exploration.

Another way the ABS promotes available statistics and assists users in accessing them is through seminars and training courses for government and other users. During 2006–07, sessions focused on the capability of the ABS website; raising the level of awareness of, and responsible use of, ABS microdata; increasing awareness and interest in information consultancies; and promoting census products and services.

Statistics for schools

There have been a number of initiatives aimed at improving the statistical literacy of teachers and students, and increasing the use of ABS data in schools. The CensusAtSchool project is a voluntary internet-based education project that continues to be popular. Students respond to questions about themselves by completing an online questionnaire. Over 2700 schools registered to take part in CensusAtSchool, with more than 110 000 students completing the questionnaire.

Building on the success of CensusAtSchool, the ABS hosted an international workshop during the year with representatives from Canada, France, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. Delegates discussed ways of expanding this project internationally, enabling which students to access data about themselves and their fellow



Over 2700 schools registered for the CensusAtSchool project

students from around the world. The main outcome of the workshop was the establishment of an international committee to oversee international growth of the CensusAtSchool project, with some initial work on developing common questions and a single entry point for the project.

A further ABS initiative is the StatSmart project, which involves a major collaboration between the ABS, University of Tasmania, University of New England, Noel Baker Centre for Mathematics and Key Curriculum Press. It is a longitudinal research project looking at

effective statistical teaching and learning in the school sector. The project will run over three years and involve over forty primary and secondary teachers from Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. The project aims to collect empirical data that will support strategies for improving statistical education in schools, and the statistical literacy of teachers and students.

The ABS has also released a new suite of innovative web pages for teachers and students, to promote the understanding and use of statistics in schools. Divided into separate sections for teachers and students, the pages offer a range of learning resources, including classroom activities, learning tools, professional development materials, games and specially selected ABS publications and datasets.

Information consultancy

The ABS provides an information consultancy service for more complex requests for data, where these cannot be satisfied by information on the ABS website. This charged service provides data tailored to clients' needs. An example of this service is international trade data which are provided via a subscription service where data are delivered on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis according to the client's specifications.

Access to Confidentialised Unit Record Files: specialist data for specialist researchers

Microdata, which are the most detailed statistical information available from the ABS, can be accessed in the form of Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs). These are a valuable source of data for specialist researchers in government departments, universities and other organisations.

CURFs are produced at different levels of detail:

- ◆ Basic CURFs are offered on CD-ROM and in the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL™).
- ◆ Expanded CURFs provide more detailed data than Basic CURFs and are available in the RADL™ and the ABS Data Laboratory (ABSDL).

The RADL™ is a system accessed through the internet, which allows users to submit statistical queries to be run on CURFs. Users do not have access to the data directly, and there are checks and controls in the system to maintain the security of the data.

CURFs are available for thirty-four ABS surveys and, as of 1 July 2006, are standard ABS statistical products. During 2006–07, the ABS released twelve new CURFs, including eight Expanded CURFs. A further eight historical CURFs were released on RADL™ for the first time in 2006–07. There are now 100 CURFs available on RADL™.

The price reduction on 1 July 2006, from \$8000 to \$1320 per CURF, has been welcomed by the research community and has led to a greater number of users accessing CURF microdata during 2006–07.

While the use of CURFs on CD-ROM remains very popular, with around half of all CURF use in this format, researchers are also increasingly using RADL™ to access both Basic and Expanded CURFs. There are now 909 researchers from eighty organisations registered to use RADL™.

RADL™ has continued to develop, with feedback from clients, an important driver for its future enhancement. RADL™ now supports the SAS, SPSS and Stata statistical languages and has an ongoing development program to improve usability and functionality. Analysis undertaken during 2006 showed that RADL™ response times have improved since earlier years, with the results of RADL™ tasks now taking an average of two minutes to be returned to clients.

A further means of accessing microdata is the ABSDL. This is a secure room or area, which is available on all ABS premises. ABSDL enables access to more sensitive data and analysis than RADL™. Any output removed by clients of ABSDL is vetted to ensure respondents cannot be identified.

The ABS website lists published results of research for which CURFs have been used. It includes academic papers published in journals and conference proceedings, higher degree theses, monographs and reports.

In 2006, the auditing of jobs in RADL™ identified irregularities in a very small number of jobs submitted. Further investigation showed that researchers at a particular research school had used unit record files in ways that were not permitted. The investigation also showed that there had been no breach of confidentiality of respondents, with the use being solely for analytical purposes. Regardless of this, the ABS considered the actions of the researchers to be of great concern, and suspended access for those involved. The incident was subsequently the subject of an article in the *Australian* newspaper in February 2007. The ABS takes great care to ensure that the unit record data accessed by researchers is strongly protected. While the actions of the researchers were of concern, the incident showed that the system of checks was effective in identifying any irregularities. As a result of the incident, changes were made to RADL™.

Client services charter

The client services charter, which describes the relationship between the ABS and users of its products and services, offers guidance to clients wishing to provide compliments or register complaints, on any aspect of client relationships or services. The charter, together with other relevant corporate information, is available on the ABS website and from ABS offices.

The ABS also has charters for respondents in business and household surveys. For more information see Chapter 11 Provider/respondent relationships.

Releases in 2006–07

The ABS releases a wide range of information from its collections through publications (in electronic, and in some cases, paper format), spreadsheets and datacubes. Most users of ABS statistics rely on releases in these forms, and the ABS is always seeking to expand and improve the range available. In particular, in 2006–07 the ABS continued to expand the range of data available through spreadsheets and datacubes.

The number of datacubes and spreadsheets increased from 5373 in 2005–06 to 7546 in 2006–07 (40 per cent increase). The increase in datacubes and spreadsheets on the ABS website since 2003–04 is shown in Table 13.1.

Table 13.1: ABS datacube and spreadsheet releases by year and frequency

Year	Datacubes	Time series spreadsheets	Total
2003–04	403	41	444
2004–05	447	258	705
2005–06	1492	3881	5373
2006–07	2280	5266	7546

The number of publications released in 2006–07 was 711, which is a decrease from 781 in 2005–06 (8.9 per cent). This decrease in publication numbers is due to the increase in the amount of data that is released as datacubes and spreadsheets. Table 13.2 shows the number of ABS releases by year.

Table 13.2: ABS publication releases(a) classified by subject matter, year and frequency

Subject matter and year	Annual	Quarterly	Monthly	Other	Total
Economic and finance releases					
2003–04	9	40	61	11	121
2004–05	11	33	47	5	96
2005–06	12	33	73	13	131
2006–07	14	32	60	12	118
Industry releases					
2003–04	15	91	70	27	203
2004–05	26	78	63	28	195
2005–06	19	84	48	24	175
2006–07	18	83	56	24	181
Population and migration releases					
2003–04	35	4	18	56	113
2004–05	36	3	24	14	77
2005–06	38	4	24	8	74
2006–07	17	4	24	6	51
Labour releases					
2003–04	6	41	52	12	111
2004–05	6	50	36	33	125
2005–06	9	57	36	40	142
2006–07	11	49	37	25	122
Social analysis releases					
2003–04	13	4	0	64	81
2004–05	14	3	0	44	61
2005–06	16	4	0	43	63
2006–07	16	5	0	72	93
Other general releases					
2003–04	34	19	36	9	98
2004–05	30	16	118(b)	15	179
2005–06	39	34	116	7	196
2006–07	26	33	51	36	146
Total					
2003–04	112	199	237	179	727
2004–05	123	183	288	139	733
2005–06	133	298	215	135	781
2006–07	102	206	228	175	711

(a) Includes catalogued publications and other products, but excludes reprints and corrigenda

(b) Catalogue numbers assigned to the Reserve Bank of Australia spreadsheets

A major release during 2006–07 was the data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

2006 Census of Population and Housing Releases

For the first results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, released on 27 June 2007, the ABS offered a new and improved online product range, including QuickStats, MapStats and Census Tables.



QuickStats - provide a summary of key Census data relating to persons, families and dwellings. QuickStats cover general topics about your chosen location and include Australian data to allow comparison.



MapStats - provide thematically mapped Census statistics for your chosen location. The maps illustrate the distribution of selected population, ethnicity, education, family, income, labour force, and dwelling characteristics.



Census Tables - are designed for clients who are interested in data on a specific topic. Census Tables provide individual tables of Census data for a chosen location in excel format.

Other examples of new releases in 2006–07 include:

The Health and Wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women: A Snapshot, 2004–05 (cat. no. 4722.0.55.001)

This snapshot provides an overview of the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Topics covered include health status, long-term health conditions, mortality, health risk factors, exposure to violence, social and emotional wellbeing, health-related actions, health screening, and contraception.

Experimental Estimates of Regional Water Use, Australia, 2004–05 (cat. no. 4610.0.55.002)

In recent times, there has been an increase in demand for water use data at geographic levels lower than state and territory. This publication presents estimates of total water use for 200 Australian water management areas, for 2004–05.

Personal Safety, Australia, 2005 (cat. no. 4906.0)

This publication presents information about men's and women's experience of physical or sexual assault, or threat by male and female perpetrators.

Principal Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary, 2005–06 (cat. no. 7111.0)

This publication contains preliminary estimates of principal agricultural commodities and livestock numbers for 2005–06.

Domestic Use of Water and Energy, Western Australia (cat. no. 4652.5)

This publication includes the results of a survey that provided a snapshot of Western Australia's household water and energy use, and identified consumption behaviour and perceptions.

Tasmanian Key Indicators (cat. no. 1304.6)

This is a web-based product containing the latest social and economic summary data on Tasmania, including labour force, wages and prices, tourism, finance, consumption and investment, state accounts, population, living arrangements, mortality, education and health. The data are also presented in spreadsheet format.

DID YOU KNOW?

Rice production almost trebled to 973 000 tonnes, reflecting increased plantings due to water availability and favourable growing conditions.

Source: *Principal Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary, 2005–06* (cat. no. 7111.0)

Use of ABS statistics

Statistics produced by the ABS are widely used to support decision making and research. Some examples include:

- ◆ information from the National Accounts, providing information about the level of economic activity, which is used to formulate and assess government macro-economic policies, assist in allocating Australian Government funds to state and territory governments and formulate industry development policies
- ◆ statistics on the health status of the population were used to support policy development, program delivery and evaluation of key government and non-government agencies involved in health, community and family services
- ◆ population estimates, which are used extensively for electoral distribution, and distribution of GST to the states and territories, and
- ◆ the CPI, which is used in developing monetary policy.

During 2006–07, ABS statistics were used in the following ways:

- ◆ informing government policies to assist and support individuals, families and businesses, during and after the bush fires in Victoria and Tasmania, cyclones in Western Australia and floods in New South Wales and Victoria

- ◆ preparing a publication by the Office for Women on women in Australia, covering labour force, childcare, employment, women's health, disability and census data, which provided an overview of women's lives
- ◆ providing background information for media stories on topics such as families, religion, birthplace and labour force
- ◆ determining the implications of potential policy decisions, geographically and across households, by developing microsimulation models to be used by government and researchers using data from the Household Expenditure Survey and the Survey of Income and Housing
- ◆ assisting the Department of Health and Ageing monitor the health of Indigenous Australians through the Indigenous Health Performance Framework
- ◆ using international trade in goods and services data in negotiating new free trade agreements and monitoring existing agreements, by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- ◆ using statistics on international trade in services and managed funds, in developing Australia as a financial services hub, by the Investment and Financial Services Association Ltd
- ◆ monitoring broadband-related policies and analysis of the information and communication technology (ICT) industry, by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, using ABS ICT statistics for development
- ◆ developing a strategic understanding of the provision of and demand for internet-based services, by the Australian Communications and Media Authority
- ◆ using data from the ABS' Innovation Surveys to assess government expenditure of \$8.5 billion as part of the Backing Australia's Ability program, by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, and
- ◆ using ABS counts of Australian businesses by industry and small geographic area to gauge the impact of the drought on non-farm businesses, which are dependent on farms for their livelihood, by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

A broad assessment of the extent of the use of ABS statistics can be seen in the accesses to these statistics through ABS dissemination services (shown in Table 13.3).

National Information and Referral Service

The National Information and Referral Service (NIRS) is the main entry point to the ABS for basic information and statistical inquiries from external customers. As shown in Table 13.3, the number of telephone calls and emails to NIRS increased in 2006–07. This is partially due to increased inquiries following the 2006 Census enumeration and output activities.

Table 13.3 provides additional information on the ways that people access ABS dissemination services.

Table 13.3: Number of accesses, by type of access, 2003–04 to 2006–07

Type of Access	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Website				
Pages viewed(a)	48 383 816	60 573 254	78 054 933	101 693 436
Pages published	13 861	16 668	23 015	148 144
Products downloaded	948 956	962 872	1 868 280	4 501 530
National Information and Referral Service				
Emails	21 136	12 862	12 588	14 294
Calls completed	85 556	60 820	56 257	58 040
Library Extension Program				
Libraries	519	518	518	515
Secondary providers				
Number	140	132	172	126(b)
Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL™) c)				
Organisations active on RADL™ (d)	25	28	32	41
Individuals active on RADL™ (e)	64	84	98	131
Statistical programs executed	6274	7535	8998	15 955

- (a) Pages viewed accounts only for views of static web pages. Much of the content of the ABS website is generated dynamically and is difficult to report on, using existing tools
- (b) Includes twenty-seven secondary distributors who incur a licence fee for on-selling purchased data
- (c) Recalculation of the RADL™ usage figures has shown that slightly fewer organisations and individuals actively used RADL™ over the period 2003–04 to 2005–06 than was shown in previous issues of this report. The number of statistical programs executed remains unchanged over the same period
- (d) Organisations active on RADL™ refers to organisations with users who executed statistical programs in RADL™ during the period shown
- (e) Individuals active on RADL™ refers to registered RADL™ users who executed statistical programs in RADL™ during the period shown

Media reporting

The ABS received widespread media coverage throughout the year, with the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and the Agricultural Census being undertaken in 2006–07, and the results of both released in the same financial year. Metropolitan television and radio coverage alone accounted for just over 16 000 mentions of ABS statistics during 2006–07. First results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing were released on 27 June 2007. In the week that followed, the ABS received close to 4000 metropolitan television and radio mentions.

In 2006–07, the ABS issued approximately 160 media releases, promoting ABS flagship releases such as *Australian Social Trends*, *Year Book Australia* and *Measures of Australia's Progress*, as well as approximately 303 media releases promoting the 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

Table 13.4 Number of ABS media releases issued, 2001–02 to 2006–07

Year	Media releases issued(a)
2001–02	156
2002–03	168
2003–04	193
2004–05	133
2005–06	169
2006–07	160

(a) Does not include media releases promoting the Census of Population and Housing

The launch of the 2006 Census results received significantly more media coverage than the 2001 Census results. In the nine days following the launch of the 2006 Census results the ABS achieved 4234 mentions in metropolitan print, radio and television coverage. It would cost \$6.9 million to purchase the equivalent amount of advertising space.

CHAPTER 14

Extended analysis of statistics

Introduction

There is a wealth of information in the statistics released by the ABS, and the ABS seeks to ensure that users can benefit from this information as fully as possible. The ABS releases data through standard products (from publications to Confidentialised Unit Record Files), as described in the previous chapter, and also produces customised data tables on a consultancy basis. However, these outputs do not meet all user needs, or use the full potential of the data. Thus, the ABS looks to add value to its statistics and extend the range of statistical outputs produced in a number of ways. These include:

- ◆ production of analytical and compendium publications such as *Australian Economic Indicators* (AEI), *Measures of Australia's Progress* (MAP) and *Australian Social Trends* (AST)
- ◆ research and development into the production of complex statistical measures such as human capital, socio-economic indices and seasonal or calendar adjustment
- ◆ bringing data together to produce modelled, synthesised or enhanced statistics, and
- ◆ exploring relationships in statistics to ensure the quality of ABS outputs, and understanding the movements and trends in various series.

In addition, in the past year, the ABS entered into a range of trial collaborations with organisations involving more detailed analysis on unit record data from business surveys.

ABS releases

The ABS produces a number of analytical reports that inform governments and the community of social and economic conditions and progress in Australia. The reports draw together data and analysis from within the ABS and from a range of other sources. They include analysis of current circumstances, changes to circumstances over time, ways that different groups of people have been affected, and the various factors that may have accounted for observed trends. As well, the analyses explore the interrelationships between economic, social and environmental aspects of life.

The following flagship publications were released during 2006–07.

***Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0)**

Measures of Australia's Progress (MAP) is a publication drawing together ABS and other data to paint a picture of national progress over the last decade. It is designed to provide the statistical evidence to allow users—those who formulate and evaluate policy, researchers and the community—to determine if life in Australia is getting better.

MAP presents a suite of indicators covering many of the areas of life most important to Australia and Australians. Indicators and commentary are presented in the following areas:

**health / education and training / work / national income / economic hardship
national wealth / housing / productivity / the natural landscape / the air and
atmosphere / oceans and estuaries / family, community and social cohesion /
crime / democracy, governance and citizenship**

In addition to these headline areas, there is commentary on the supplementary areas of:

**culture and leisure / inflation / communication / competitiveness and openness /
transport**

The headline indicators in MAP are updated annually. *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001) was released in April 2007.

Australian Economic Indicators (cat. no. 1350.0)

Australian Economic Indicators (AEI) is a monthly publication which draws together ABS and other data to provide a compendium of key national, state and international economic time series. It also contains feature articles. This monthly flagship publication was first released in 1991 and has remained popular with users.

During 2006–07, the AEI webpage was enhanced, with the addition of explanatory notes, abbreviations, long time-series datacubes, access to historical AEI feature articles, and the publication of the *Australian Economic Indicators Glossary, 2006* (cat. no. 1350.0.55.001). In the future, AEI tables will be updated on the internet as new data becomes available, rather than once a month. Future developments will focus on data visualisation and the ability to look at broad level data.

Australian Social Trends (cat. no. 4102.0)

Australian Social Trends (AST) is an annual publication containing articles on contemporary social issues and a range of social indicators that present an overview of some key social trends in the various areas of social concern (such as health, work, family and community). AST brings together information across a range of areas to address complex social issues. Articles released in the 2006 issue included the following:

- ◆ fathers' work and family balance
- ◆ non-resident parents
- ◆ chronic health conditions and disability
- ◆ education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- ◆ trends in women's employment
- ◆ distribution and components of household wealth, and
- ◆ environmental impact of household energy use.

DID YOU KNOW?

Almost half (49 per cent) of household spending on goods and services in 2003–04 was on food and non-alcoholic beverages, current housing costs and transport. This proportion was unchanged from 1984.

Source: *Australian Social Trends, 2006* (cat. no. 4102.0)

Other articles released in regular publications

There were a number of articles released as part of regular publications, generally highlighting changes that may have an impact on the series. In April 2006, an article 'Australian Exporters, 2005', in *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0) addressed the compilation of counts of the number of exporters.

Other publications with articles were:

- ◆ *Australian Labour Market Statistics* (cat. no. 6105.0), which included articles on changes to ABS measures of employee remuneration, changes in where people work over time, job search experience of unemployed people and labour force transitions, and
- ◆ *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0), which included articles on changes to international trade in services statistics, new methodology for deriving counts of Australian exporters, and international trade in services by partner country.

Data enhancement

The ABS Census Data Enhancement project aims to enhance the value of data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and subsequent censuses by creating a Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD) for a 5 per cent sample of the Australian population. The SLCD is an investment in the future and the potential benefits are substantial. The SLCD will provide information on patterns in individual experiences over time and therefore provide insight into the effectiveness of policy or the need for new policy interventions.

The project has proceeded in line with the statement of intention published on the ABS website in August 2005. Work in 2006–07 continued to focus on assessing matching methodologies and developing options for selection of the SLCD sample. The linking of datasets for various quality studies has commenced.

Other analytical work in 2006–07

The ABS regularly reviews the methodology used to produce statistics, to enhance the usefulness of data to encourage and inform decision making amongst governments and the community. Analytical work undertaken by the ABS provides opportunities to incorporate improvements and new approaches, where appropriate. In 2006–07, the ABS undertook a range of analytical work:

Measuring option values and the economic benefits of completing secondary education (cat. no 1352.0.55.082)

This research paper applied the ABS human capital measurement framework to examine the significance of base level education in the production of human capital over life cycles of young men and young women. The distinctive feature of this study is that it derives the option values generated by completing secondary education, in terms of the opportunities to obtain more advanced human capital skills through undertaking tertiary study.

Deriving measures of engagement in secondary education (cat. no. 1351.0.55.016)

This research examined the limitations of the apparent retention rate indicator and proposed a method for deriving more accurate measures of grade progression or retention in secondary schools, to ensure continued relevance for policy analysis.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1986, the average primary school size was 210 students; by 2006 this had grown to 250 students.

Source: *Schools, Australia, 2006* (cat. no. 4221.0)

Collaborations

The ABS reported, with respect to 2005–06, on trial collaborations in the analysis of business survey microdata, involving the Productivity Commission, the Department of Industry Tourism and Research, the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics, and the Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics.

During 2006–07, each of those analytical collaborations reached its final phase. Therefore, it has been possible to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the alternative, trial arrangements. That knowledge has informed ABS plans for future collaborations that rely on the analysis of business microdata.

Future directions have also been influenced by Brian Pink, the incoming Australian Statistician, who has expressed his interest in building on both the ABS and Statistics New Zealand experience in analytical collaborations. As Statistician in New Zealand, he had ample evidence of the power and potential of seconding officers from other government agencies, international statistical agencies and academic institutions, to support him in performing his statistical functions.

Such secondments allow multiple benefits, including enhanced analytical outputs and a bilateral exchange of knowledge between officers seconded from research and policy institutions and officers of the statistical agency.

In addition, such arrangements are consistent with the strict secrecy provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. This underpins ongoing provider confidence in the protection of information provided to the ABS. This confidence is critical to the high level of cooperation which the ABS receives and the resultant high quality of the data available for decision making and analysis.

The ABS has commenced investigation of means to extend secondment arrangements to officers from academic institutions and to ensuring that the analytical effort can draw, not only on ABS survey data, but also on the increasingly rich administrative data holdings of the ABS.

In early 2007, negotiations commenced with one agency on future secondment arrangements, building on the experience developed in analysing the 2003 Innovation Survey, for application with respect to the 2005 survey.

CHAPTER 15

Statistical standards and infrastructure

Introduction

The ABS has a lead role in avoiding duplication in the collection of statistics, attaining comparability between collections undertaken by different agencies, and maximising the utilisation of statistics.

The development and use of statistical standards and infrastructure underpins statistical work in the ABS. The use of a comprehensive set of robust statistical standards assists in providing an integrated and meaningful statistical picture of society and the economy.

Various aspects of statistical standards and infrastructure are needed for the effective collection and release of data, including:

- ◆ classification schemes that categorise data element concepts (eg industry, occupation)
- ◆ definitions of the concepts underpinning data elements (eg dependency, usual residence)
- ◆ definitions of statistical units (eg business, family, income unit)
- ◆ tools to enable coding of data to standard classifications, and
- ◆ metadata repositories to store the information about data.

The ABS develops national statistical standards, frameworks and methodologies, which are applied, as appropriate, to all ABS statistical collections, including business and household surveys. The ABS takes a leading role by encouraging other Australian Government and state and territory agencies to adopt these standards, frameworks and methodologies in their statistical activities. Extensive information about ABS standards is available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au) under Methods, classifications, concepts and standards.

The ABS also works closely with other agencies involved in the development of standards and frameworks. The ABS is leading the development of the National Data Network which provides infrastructure, protocols, standards and services to support the sharing and integrating of data across Australia. For more information see Chapter 10 Engagement with users and producers of statistics.

The national statistical standards, frameworks and methodologies align with international equivalents, and the ABS assists in the development of many key international statistical standards, frameworks and methodologies. For more information on the ABS involvement in international standards development, see Chapter 16 International engagement.

Development and implementation of enhanced international statistical standards

The review of key international macro-economic standards, which began in 2003, has focused on maintaining their relevance in a changing economic environment and on ensuring the various economic standards are appropriately aligned. The United Nations Statistical Commission agreed on a proposed set of changes at its meeting in February 2007. Drafts of the core chapters of the revised System of National Accounts and the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual, 2008 have been completed, incorporating significant ABS input. Release of the updated manuals is expected by mid-2009.

The ABS intends to implement the revised macro-economic standards, in conjunction with the implementation of Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006, for the 2008–09 release of the annual National Accounts in November 2009. In June 2007, the ABS commenced consultation with key users on its implementation plans for the revised standards. Discussions have been held with the Treasury and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Productivity Commission and the ABS-convened Economic Statistics User Group.



Peter Harper, Deputy Australian Statistician and Ron McKenzie, Statistics New Zealand's Principal Economic Statistician, Industry and Labour Group, at the celebrations of the 2006 ANZSIC release

The ABS has also contributed to the revision to the related OECD Benchmark Definition of Foreign Direct Investment, which guides the ABS reporting on foreign direct investment and the Manual on Standards in International Trade in Services.

Introduction of revised standards for international trade statistics

The revised Australian Harmonized Export Commodity Classification was released by the ABS in electronic format in November 2006. It was revised to incorporate the new international standard, the Harmonized System 2007, and included correspondences between new and old statistical codes. An updated imports classification, the Combined Australian Customs Tariff Nomenclature and Statistical Classification, which is maintained by the Australian Customs Service, was released in November 2006. An ABS information paper, *Changes on 1 January 2007 to Statistical Codes in the Export and Import Classifications* (cat. no. 1233.0.55.001) was also released for the information of users. The January 2007 issue of *International Trade in Goods and Services* (cat. no. 5368.0), released in March 2007, presented both import and export of goods collected on the new basis.

Contribution to the Australian Accounting Standards Board harmonisation of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles/Government Finance Statistics reporting

The ABS has made a significant contribution to the work of the Australian Accounting Standards Board in harmonising Generally Accepted Accounting Principles/Government Finance Statistics reporting (GAAP/GFS) reporting. A new harmonised accounting standard, AAS1049 Financial Reporting of General Government Sectors by Governments, was issued in September 2006. The development of a harmonised standard for whole of government financial reporting is nearing completion.

There will be no major changes to the ABS' GFS program as a result of the implementation of the new standards. The ABS will continue to publish independent GFS statistics. However, as GFS concepts are being increasingly embedded into public sector accounting standards as a result of harmonisation, there will be a greater onus on the ABS to ensure the wider dissemination and understanding of GFS concepts.

Australian equivalents to the International Financial Reporting Standards

The ABS has been monitoring the implementation and impact of the Australian equivalents to the International Financial Reporting Standards (AIFRS) on reported data, since 2005. AIFRS affected the ability of many businesses to report data in a manner consistent with statistical concepts. Processes were put in place to monitor and manage these impacts, including changes to survey forms. Despite these processes, it was not possible to fully quantify the impacts on economic statistics of AIFRS due to the difficulties in separating AIFRS impacts from other real world events (such as revaluations).

Many of the AIFRS impacts have been excluded from National Accounts publications. However, industry publications, which publish on an accounting basis, may have seen some additional variation in published estimates. A broad statement warning users of potentially increased volatility of estimates due to AIFRS has been included in affected publications.

Standards for occupation

In September 2006 the *Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 2005* (cat. no. 1220.0) was released, and was used in the coding of occupations in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. More information about ANZSCO is available in the special article in Chapter 8.

The ABS represented Australia on the Technical Expert Group for updating the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO). The ABS provided input to these meetings through detailed comments and suggestions on the issues raised in the discussion papers. The ABS also coordinated Australian responses to the ISCO questionnaires, in conjunction with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

Standards for disability-related variables

In 2006–07 a number of projects updating existing standards or releasing new standards were completed in time for use in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. In response to the increasing demand for data on disability issues, the ABS has developed standards for the following two variables:

- ◆ Severity of disability, and
- ◆ Core activity need for assistance.

Severity of disability includes the ABS' standard set of questions used in household surveys to establish the number of people with a disability and, the severity of that disability.

Core activity need for assistance identifies the number of people with a disability requiring assistance with core activities (core activities are defined as mobility, self care and communication). A question on core activity need for assistance was included in the 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

In the 2006 Census of Population and Housing additional questions were asked about three new issues: disability assistance, unpaid work and volunteer activities. These questions were included after feedback and discussions following the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, and will provide extensive information about the need for support and carers across Australia.

Geography

Mesh blocks

Mesh blocks are geographical units that are much smaller than collection districts, and are currently the smallest ABS spatial unit. Australia will be divided into approximately 300 000 mesh blocks, compared to 39 000 collection districts.

A revised set of draft boundaries for mesh blocks, incorporating stakeholder feedback, was used for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. Once the results have been analysed during 2006–07, a final set of mesh block boundaries are expected to be released towards the end of 2007, or early 2008.

The advantage of mesh blocks is they can be used to approximate any medium or large-sized geographical region. Therefore data collected on this basis can be accurately recast between geographical regions. Currently, a wide range of geographic units are in use throughout Australia. Many of these units have been developed independently, and data cannot be readily compared. Mesh blocks will result in more accurate geographical statistical comparisons, which should ultimately lead to improved government policy formulation and service delivery.

The ABS intends that mesh blocks will become the building block for all statistical, and many political and administrative regions in Australia.



Mesh blocks are geographical units that are much smaller than collection districts, and are currently the smallest ABS spatial unit

The ABS has developed the web service, AddressCoder@ABS, to assign a statistical local area, collection district and mesh block code to addresses. Since the second half of 2006, this service has been available to external users who register with the National Data Network.

Although they are primarily a building block for larger geographical units, basic demographic data from the 2006 Census will be available for mesh blocks. This, and any other data releases at the mesh block level, will be limited to ensure confidentiality is protected.

Australian Standard Geographical Classification

Since 1984, the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), which is updated annually, has provided a basis for collecting, disseminating and analysing statistics that have a spatial component. It is used throughout the ABS and is widely accepted in the statistical community. During 2006–07, *Statistical Geography Volume 1, 2006, Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (cat. no. 1216.0) was released, as well as several related publications including digital boundaries and the *National Localities Index* (cat. no. 1252.0.55.001).

Review of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification

Mesh blocks challenge many of the assumptions behind the current ASGC. As mesh blocks cannot be easily integrated with the ASGC, the ABS has commenced a review of the ASGC, with the aim of creating a new statistical geography classification that is more useful for the presentation and analysis of spatial statistics.

The review will be undertaken in several phases. The first phase will be to develop a new conceptual and structural basis for the classification, which is expected to be completed by late 2007. This will be followed by a reconsideration of the current definitions of urban and rural, and remoteness, in 2008. The review must be completed, and its results implemented, in time for the 2011 Census. The current ASGC will be published until 2010.

Metadata

Metadata is information used to find data, to assist a user to understand that data (ie definitions and descriptions), or to guide a user in the appropriate use of that data (quality). Currently, much of the metadata for ABS collections is stored in local facilities (ie associated with the collection), and is sometimes difficult to reuse between processes, or as a corporate resource across collections. In recent years, the ABS has developed an end-to-end (E2E) Metadata Management Strategy to establish a metadata environment that:

- ◆ supports ABS statistical business objectives
- ◆ enables better dissemination outcomes
- ◆ is efficient, effective and user-friendly
- ◆ promotes accountability over the life-cycle of metadata, and
- ◆ provides a metadata resource as an information system in its own right.

This strategy will have considerable benefits for users of ABS statistics, making it easier for them to find, understand and use ABS statistics effectively. It will also align the ABS metadata environment with the associated international standards for metadata, such as the standard for data element definitions (ISO/IEC-11179).

The ABS has made good progress implementing the E2E Metadata Management Strategy. In 2006–07 the Economic Standards area completed registration of definitional metadata for a number of collections in preparation for migration to the Input Data Warehouse (IDW). The IDW is a managed unit record data store that aims to service collection activities (including editing), analysis, research and management needs between initial data capture until movement of data to the managed output data store. The Integrated System for Household Surveys project team also completed the design of the Questionnaire Development Tool, which will interface to the ABS Corporate Metadata Repository for creating and reusing data element definitions, and this tool is now being built.

CHAPTER 16

International engagement

Introduction

One of the ABS' functions, established in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*, is to provide 'liaison between Australia, on the one hand, and other countries and international organisations, on the other hand, in relation to statistical matters'.

During 2006–07, the ABS met its international responsibilities through an active contribution to the international statistical activities that are important to Australia and the region, including:

- ◆ active and high-level membership of the international statistical community (including influencing the development of international statistical standards and indicators), and
- ◆ targeted and tailored technical assistance to national statistical agencies in the Asia-Pacific region.



Dennis Trewin, former Australian Statistician, meeting Charles Louis Kincannon, former Director of the US Census Bureau

Involvement in the international statistical community

The ABS' involvement in the international statistical community takes a number of forms, including participating in international meetings, visiting the statistical offices of other national statistical organisations and international intergovernmental organisations, and hosting visits from staff of these organisations. This involvement provides effective interchange with counterparts in statistical and international organisations. In many cases, these discussions related to the development of international standards, frameworks and methodologies.

In 2006–07, the ABS participated in a number of important international meetings and conferences, including:

- ◆ Conferences of European Statisticians, held in Geneva, Switzerland and Washington DC, United States
- ◆ Eleventh Meeting of Heads of National Statistical Organisations (NSO) of East Asian countries, held in Tokyo, Japan
- ◆ Sixth Management Seminar for Heads of NSO in Asia and Pacific—United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia Pacific, held in Hong Kong
- ◆ Thirty-eighth Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission Meeting, which marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Statistical Commission, held in New York, United States
- ◆ Seventh Association of South East Asian Nations Heads of Statistical Offices Meeting, held in Gadong, Brunei Darrussalam
- ◆ Fifth Meeting of the United Nations Statistical Division Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts, held in New York, United States
- ◆ International Comparison Program Executive Board, Advisory Board and Regional Advisory Board Meetings, held in Washington DC, United States, and Manila, Philippines, and
- ◆ Fifth Session Asia Pacific Excellence in Statistics—UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, held in Daejeon, Republic of Korea

ABS senior executive hold prominent positions on a number of international groups.

Mr Brian Pink, Australian Statistician:

- ◆ Australia's Head of Delegation to the United Nations Statistical Commission
- ◆ President of the International Association for Official Statistics, 2005–07, and
- ◆ Vice Chairman of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Committee on Statistics.

Mr Dennis Trewin, Australian Statistician, retired in January 2007 but has continued in these positions:

- ◆ Chair of the International Comparison Program Global Executive Board, World Bank
- ◆ Chair of the Conference of European Statisticians Task Force on Confidentiality and Microdata, and
- ◆ Member of the Advisory Board of the Marrakesh Action Plan for Statistics.

Mr Peter Harper, Deputy Australian Statistician, Economic Statistics Group:

- ◆ Chair of Canberra Group II on the Measurement of Non-financial Assets
- ◆ Member of the Advisory Expert Group for the 1993 System of National Accounts Update, and
- ◆ Member of the Regional Advisory Board for the Asia-Pacific International Comparison Project.

Ms Susan Linacre, Deputy Australian Statistician, Population Statistics Group:

- ◆ Council member of the International Statistical Institute, and
- ◆ President Elect of the International Association of Survey Statisticians (2007–09).

Visits to the ABS

During the year, the ABS received a number of visits from other national statistics offices, statistical agencies and international statistical organisations, including from Cambodia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Vanuatu, Vietnam, the International Monetary Fund, World Health Organization and the OECD.

The duration and purpose of these visits vary, but all act to build stronger relationships with organisations with which we share knowledge and know-how. For example, discussions held during the year on statistical management information systems with representatives from the General Statistics Office (GSO) of Vietnam were most productive. Further work with the GSO is expected in 2007–08, with the overall aim of strengthening the national statistical system of Vietnam.

International standards, frameworks and methodologies

The ABS supports sound methodological approaches to the development of standards, aids international comparability where meaningful, and helps ensure that such standards and statistical developments reflect Australian user interests. User interest in these types of studies continues to develop.

The ABS has contributed to the development of key international standards, frameworks and methodologies. Examples of contributions are outlined below:

- ◆ ABS staff participated in a review of the Chilean Information and Communication Technology (ICT) satellite account work, undertaken by Chile's Ministry of Economy. Australia and Chile are the only two countries that produce an ICT satellite account, and discussions were held to develop consensus on issues, for which there are no international standards. The two countries will continue to collaborate in this field of work.
- ◆ The ABS is represented on an OECD task force on the Development of OECD Statistical Products.
- ◆ The ABS contributed at meetings of the OCED Working Party on National Accounts, and the Working Party on Financial Statistics in October 2006. The ABS presented papers on the ICT satellite account and updated measures of hours worked.
- ◆ ABS staff participated in the 2006 International Association for Official Statistics Conference—People on the Move: Measuring Environmental, Social and Economic Impacts Within and Between Nations.

- ◆ ABS staff attended a group meeting on Environmental–Economic Accounting and a United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental–Accounting meeting. The groups continue to work towards increasing the implementation and use of the System of Environmental–Economic Accounting (SEEA), with one goal being to raise SEEA to an international standard by 2010.
- ◆ ABS staff attended the United Nations Statistics Division Advisory Expert Group on National Accounts in March 2007, which is coordinating the update of the System of National Accounts for proposed endorsement at the 2008 meeting of the United National Statistics Division.
- ◆ ABS staff participated in the International Meeting on Indigenous Health Measurement, which was held in Canberra. Representatives from Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia attended.
- ◆ ABS staff contributed to an OECD workshop in London, discussing the measurement of non-market output.
- ◆ ABS staff presented a course at the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific Fifth Management Seminar on Time Series Analysis.

International Comparison Program

The International Comparison Program (ICP) is a statistical initiative to produce internationally comparable expenditure values, purchasing power parity (PPP) estimates and comparative price levels. All major international development agencies, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Fund, use PPP to analyse economic and social conditions within their areas of concern. PPP takes into account the cost of a common basket of goods in the countries being compared. The ICP offers a powerful tool for comparative research on economic and social development.

The former Australian Statistician, Mr Dennis Trewin, has retained the Chair of the ICP's Global Executive Board, which last met in February 2007. The Deputy Australian Statistician, Mr Peter Harper, has also been appointed to the Board. The Asian Development Bank is responsible for coordinating the Asia-Pacific region's participation in the ICP. A Regional Advisory Board for the Asia-Pacific region meets about every six to eight months to monitor progress in the region, the most recent meeting of this group was in June 2007.

The ABS has been heavily involved in most recent ICP exercises, particularly in China, the South Pacific and Asia Pacific regions. ABS assistance to the China and South Pacific sub-projects was recently completed and the ABS is continuing its commitment in the Asia-Pacific region, in particular, assisting the Asian Development Bank to release the final publication by the end of 2007.

Statistical training and technical assistance

The ABS continues to contribute to international statistical training, through the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, the South East Asian Central Banks Research and Training Centre and the International Monetary Fund.

The ABS provides international statistical assistance to countries in the Asia-Pacific region, which seek ABS advice and support and are high priority for the Australian Government. The ABS currently has three major long-term programs of technical assistance in place:

- ◆ Indonesia—Government Partnership Fund
- ◆ Pacific region—Pacific Governance Support Program, and
- ◆ Vanuatu—Vanuatu Statistical Institutional Strengthening Program.

Indonesia

The ABS has had a long association with Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS)—Statistics Indonesia, and the two agencies have signed a number of successive memorandums of understanding on cooperation in statistics. As part of the Australia Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development, AusAID is managing a Government Partnership Fund (GPF) to assist Indonesia. The GPF is a flagship of Australia's enhanced partnership with Indonesia and provides a vehicle for supporting the further development of Indonesia's economic governance and public sector management capabilities.

Specifically, the goal of ABS involvement in the GPF is to improve the Indonesian statistical system and to establish greater coordination and a stronger relationship between Australia, BPS and Bank Indonesia, with a mutually agreed identification of skill and capability gaps.

A planned program of assistance, to be funded under the GPF, was reviewed in 2006–07, during a visit to the ABS from the new head of BPS. The program and its two priority areas were confirmed.

Two missions were undertaken in 2006–07 by senior ABS officers. The first mission assisted BPS to strengthen its labour statistics, including population frames, sampling strategy and sampling rotation process and small area estimation. The second mission provided advice to BPS in its development of a strategic plan for its information technology. The strategic plan is expected to include key initiatives in the areas of governance, communications, service orientation, reliability, people and IT management systems.

Further missions under the program are planned for 2007–08.

Pacific region

In 2005, AusAID agreed to fund an ABS proposal under its Pacific Governance Support Program. The aim of the proposal is to strengthen the national statistical systems of Pacific Island countries.

In 2006–07, the ABS, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, provided project management training in the Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu. Core activities involved:

- ◆ providing project management training for a major survey
- ◆ returning at the field-test stage of the survey to ascertain the extent to which the principles of project management had been put into practice and implement any remedial action required, and
- ◆ returning after the completion of the survey to review and evaluate the overall process.

The training has been well supported and all participants have been interested and enthusiastic. By using a current survey as a case study, participants have benefited from practical project management rather than simply learning theory. Having the training delivered in three phases has helped to reinforce the techniques and principles of project management and allowed discussion on consequences of actions taken, and ways to avoid similar problems in the future. It has also allowed remedial action to be taken when required.



The training room used for participants from the National Statistics Office and the Ministry of Health attending an eight-day course conducted by the ABS in the Solomon Islands

The current program should be completed by December 2007. The ABS has sought further funding under AusAID's PGSP 2007–08 funding round to extending the project management training to two more countries in the Pacific region and to pilot a strategic planning workshop for statistical agencies in regional countries.

Vanuatu

The ABS continues its assistance to the Vanuatu National Statistics Office (VNSO) under the AusAID-funded Vanuatu Statistical Institutional Strengthening Program. The aim of the program is to ensure the sustainable development and capability of the VNSO through improved corporate governance. In addition to delivering strategic planning and forward work programming training to the VNSO, the ABS also reviewed and provided advice on restructuring the office to improve its efficiency and to enable it to meet the emerging information requirements of government more effectively.

Activities at the beginning of 2007 had a practical focus. Assistance has been provided to enable the VNSO to complete two major surveys simultaneously—the Agriculture Census and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey—and to maintain its ongoing work program. The ABS arranged technical consultancies to assist with various aspects of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey and to compile and produce the Vanuatu National Accounts.

In May 2007, the ABS commenced an executive mentoring program in Vanuatu, with a focus on developing leadership, management, budgeting and planning skills. Other activities planned are the delivery of the project management for surveys training, and continued technical assistance.

The program will continue through 2007–08 with the ABS and AusAID reviewing progress every six months.

In addition to planned programs of assistance, the ABS provided statistical advice and capacity building in response to various requests from countries in the region and from international statistical organisations. This included assistance to:

- ◆ Vietnam on information and knowledge management and statistical management information systems
- ◆ Singapore on national accounts and population census
- ◆ China and India on management of data and metadata, and
- ◆ the IMF in reviewing macro-economic statistics in Papua New Guinea.

CHAPTER 17

Effectiveness of activities

Introduction

The ABS endeavours to find ways to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. A number of processes, systems and controls have been implemented, for both statistical and non-statistical activities, to assist the ABS to meet these goals. These include the strategic audit and review program, operational and statistical reviews, as well as special initiatives such as the operations research initiative.

Many of the reviews and audits conducted seek to ensure that the ABS achieves cost-effective outputs, either as a primary or secondary objective. A key approach in achieving this is benchmarking ABS activities against similar activities elsewhere in the ABS, in other agencies in Australia, or overseas agencies. This provides the opportunity for the ABS to understand and learn from best practice, and to improve its performance.

The ABS continues to use external providers for a wide range of functions, including information technology training, leadership and management training, staff counselling services, legal advice, building maintenance, the supply of stationery, and internal audit.

OPERATIONS RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The Operations Research Unit was established in 2006 to identify improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of ABS survey processes, by applying scientific methods to the analysis of data about ABS operations, collected daily, as part of the ABS survey processes. The work program focuses on the analysis of:

- ◆ travel patterns of ABS interviewers collecting data from households, and
- ◆ follow-up strategies for business surveys.

A number of strategies for improving cost-effectiveness of ABS data collections and/or reducing the burden on data providers have been identified. For example, the Economic Statistics Data Centre, which is responsible for business surveys, is testing changes aimed at reducing the level of follow-up by taking into account observed response patterns. Identification of efficient and effective interviewers has led to the discovery of successful cost-minimisation strategies within the Population Surveys Operations area.

Additional analysis of economic and population data collections is planned to assist with the realisation of cost savings and identification of further opportunities for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of these collections.

Business continuity

During 2006–07, a key effectiveness strategy for the ABS has been consolidation of the business continuity strategy, with a focus on ensuring the ABS is able to continue its work in an emergency or crisis situation. Significant development and testing of the ABS business continuity management framework was carried out in 2006–07. As of 30 June 2007, the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) included sixty-two sub-plans covering every facet of key business activities, and emergency and crisis support functions.



The ACT office was affected by storm damage in February 2007

The BCP was activated in February 2007 during the Canberra storms, which damaged the ABS' ACT office, with the result that the ACT office recommenced operations within 24 hours.

A review of the BCP in May 2007 found that ABS progress in the business continuity management arena had been significant, and was in accordance with best practice set out in the Australian National Audit Office Better Practice Guide for Business Continuity Management.

End-to-End Program for Business Statistics

The End-to-End Program for Business Statistics is the final stage in the major change program for ABS business statistics, which commenced in 2002. This change program has been instrumental in improving the relevance and quality of business statistics in the most effective way for the ABS and its providers. By mid-2007, approximately half of the business-related statistical and administrative data collections conformed to a set of standard processes, methodologies and technologies.

Review of National Accounts

An internal review was commissioned by the ABS to investigate any significant sources of measurement errors in the National Accounts estimates of gross domestic product (GDP). The review was completed in November 2006 and concluded that there were no significant or systematic sources of measurement error. However, the review made fourteen recommendations in relation to aspects of the National Accounts, all of which were accepted by the ABS. Actions are in progress to follow up on the recommendations.

Other efficiency and effectiveness strategies for statistics

Improving time series analysis

SEASABS (SEASonal analysis, ABS standards) is a system for performing time series analysis on ABS statistics. The release of a new version in December 2006 marked a significant improvement in the ABS' capability for time series analysis. It incorporates an improved modelling methodology and improved functionality for incorporating series breaks, backcasting series, and reconciling related series.

Expanded standards for the use of electronic survey forms

Expanded standards for the use of electronic survey forms within Microsoft Excel spreadsheets are expected to improve survey response rates and the quality of data captured. This work was presented at the third International Conference of Establishment Surveys, in June 2007.

Further development of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing instruments was also completed in 2006–07, and will allow ABS staff to record and retrieve interactions with data providers more effectively.

Improving the accuracy of statistics and reducing the resources required to maintain the population frame

Significant changes were introduced to the methodology of the Agricultural Census, associated with the scoping of units, sample and frame management procedures and estimation. These changes have improved the accuracy of the statistics and reduced the resources required to maintain the population frame. For more information see *Principal Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary, 2005–06* (cat. no. 7111.0).

Enhancing estimation and sample design

During 2006–07, the Labour Force Survey estimation and sample underwent significant changes. A composite estimation methodology will be adopted in 2007, and will result in improved cost-effectiveness for the survey.

Developing better products

A Census Table Builder product was developed for release in 2007. Table Builder is a SuperWEB product which allows users to construct their own tables via an interactive web interface, using a database containing the 2006 Census unit record file. Table Builder will give users a great degree of flexibility in designing and producing tables to meet their needs, and allow them to obtain relevant tables more quickly than in the past.

Project management

In 2006–07, an internal audit of project management was undertaken, to assess the overall effectiveness of project management in the ABS, and to determine if there were any systemic issues. The audit focused on generic high level governance of project management and key controls. It concluded that there are suitable project governance practices and processes in place to allow for the effective management of projects, both IT-related and non-IT related. The audit identified the following areas of project management that would benefit from improvement: project measurement, monitoring and reporting; program management; ongoing maintenance and support for project management tools; training and awareness; and project risk, issue and quality management.

Learning and development

In 2006–07, the ABS looked for efficiency gains by conducting a joint tender process with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to secure a new panel of training providers. The panel is now in place and has enabled the ABS to secure the services of a range of companies to deliver on its diverse requirements, including leadership, management and supervision, project management, writing skills, and to facilitate forward work planning days.

Property management

The ABS engaged consultants to provide advice on various aspects of the ABS' approach to choosing and managing its property portfolio. In particular, assistance was sought to identify areas of potential savings and how to achieve greater cost effectiveness, especially in relation to the design and fit out of ABS tenancies. The review covered a full range of property matters including environmental opportunities, accommodation standards, flexible leasing terms, geographic location of work and the effect of the physical working environment on productivity. The report made a number of recommendations and the ABS is now working to implement these.

One key area of work is the development and implementation of a national Environmental Management System as, while the ABS meets current energy targets, significant work is needed to meet the revised mandatory government targets announced in 2006, to be implemented by the 2011–12 financial year.

Another area of focus is incorporation of the design findings into future ABS fit outs in order to achieve more flexible and intelligent use of space, which aligns to ABS needs.

Procurement

In response to the Management Advisory Committee report on *Reducing Red Tape in the Australian Public Service*, which was released in early 2007, the ABS has reviewed its procurement policies and identified opportunities to streamline procurement processes. The new approach to procurement will further improve operational efficiency by reducing administrative effort for both the ABS and suppliers, in many of its procurement activities.

Section VI

HOW THE ABS OPERATES



CHAPTER 18

ABS corporate governance

Introduction

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.

Key ABS corporate governance mechanisms include:

- ◆ 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 activities
- ◆ advisory bodies and user groups, which enable the ABS to consult widely with the user community in relation to the ABS work program
- ◆ an audit and review program covering the different facets of ABS operations, overseen by the Audit Committee
- ◆ a risk management framework to assist in identifying and managing risks at organisational, operational and project level, and
- ◆ instructions and manuals to ensure staff have access to ABS policies and practices.

ABS values

Underlying these mechanisms are the Australian Public Service and ABS values, which are the basis for the ethical standards for ABS employees.

As an Australian Public Service agency, ABS employees are required to abide by the APS Values and the Code of Conduct. In addition, the ABS Corporate Plan sets out values specific to the ABS, which is essential to the ABS' role as an independent provider of information for Australia.

These values are promoted through training courses and awareness-raising. They are used as a reference for the actions and decisions of all ABS staff.

The ABS values are:

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

For more information on ABS values see Chapter 19 Management of human resources.

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, ensuring appropriate planning and implementation to address those priorities, and effective monitoring of ABS activities. The major senior management committees are outlined below.

Division Heads Meeting

Division Heads Meetings (DHMs) are the ABS executive meetings, held weekly, to address emerging corporate issues. They are attended by the Statistician, the Deputy Statisticians, and the First Assistant Statisticians, with other attendees as required for particular items. Branch heads and regional directors provide regular reports on their functional area of responsibility to DHMs.

ABS Management Meeting

The Management Meetings play a major role in determining ABS strategic directions, priorities and resource allocations. They involve all members of the DHMs, as well as all the regional directors. The Management Meeting is held twice each year, and discusses the ABS forward work program, as well as a range of other strategic issues. Each division and group details their strategic directions annually to the Management Meeting.

Accountability Division Heads Meeting

Accountability Division Heads Meetings (Accountability DHMs) provide a forum for reviewing the ABS' financial position. They also play an important role in the planning cycle, providing the opportunity for senior managers to discuss work program priorities within the broader budgetary context, and reach agreement on allocation of funds.

Accountability DHMs are scheduled four times each year and are chaired by the Australian Statistician. Other members are the DHM members and the ABS Chief Financial Officer.

Audit Committee

The ABS Audit Committee provides assurance to the Australian Statistician that a comprehensive control framework is in place and working effectively for all business systems; the operation and management of all 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 is of appropriate quality and 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. Throughout 2006–07, the committee also included two experienced external members.

The Audit Committee meets four times each year and reports to the executive meetings as appropriate.



The role played by senior management committees is an important feature of ABS corporate governance

Human Resources Division Heads Meeting

Human Resources Division Heads Meetings (HR DHM) provide a forum for members to actively contribute to strategic directions for human resources and guide human resource management practices to ensure the achievement of ABS goals.

Members of the HR DHM undertake a governance role in respect to people strategies by:

- ◆ providing assistance in determining human resource priorities
- ◆ monitoring progress on significant strategic human resource projects, and
- ◆ identifying human resource opportunities, issues and risks.

A wide range of matters have been considered at HR DHMs, including workforce planning, learning and development, workplace diversity, occupational health and safety, remuneration and recruitment.

HR DHMs are scheduled twice each year and are chaired by the Australian Statistician. Other members include all DHM members, a nominated regional director, the Assistant Statistician, Human Resources Branch, the Assistant Statistician, Corporate Support Branch, and an external member. The external member has extensive public service management experience.

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.

Information Resources Management Committee

The Information Resources Management Committee considers matters of strategic significance concerning data and information management, related policy, and major issues relating to the application of information and communication technology in the ABS. It also has responsibility for the strategic management of cost recovery activities of the information technology and technology services areas of the ABS. The committee meets four times each year, and reports to each Management Meeting and the DHM, as appropriate.

In 2006–07, the committee was chaired by the Deputy Australian Statistician, Economic Statistics Group, and consisted of the Deputy Australian Statistician, Population and Social Statistics Group, all First Assistant Statisticians, a nominated regional director, and selected Assistant Statisticians.

Planning

The ABS mission statement and corporate plan provide the context and high-level framework for making decisions on the ABS' forward work program.

While much of the ABS work program remains constant from year to year, the planning process requires the ABS to examine the environment in which it is working and identify future statistical needs. Through the planning process, the ABS considers how it can best meet emerging needs with its finite human and financial resources.

Within this framework, the annual ABS planning cycle structure comprises a series of high-level meetings and forums, where senior managers formally and extensively consider the relative priorities and competing resource requirements of program components. In doing this, particular attention is given to:

- ◆ input from user consultations
- ◆ the extent to which particular statistical activities continue to be justified in relation to other work for which a demand has been expressed by users
- ◆ the contribution statistical activities make to meeting National Statistical Service objectives
- ◆ the cost imposed on respondents to collections, in terms of time and effort
- ◆ prospective total resources available to the ABS within the next triennium
- ◆ the market potential and revenue implications of the various initiatives proposed
- ◆ productivity gains that have been achieved or may be possible to achieve in the future, and
- ◆ the relative share of resources spent on statistical and non-statistical work.

Aspects of the proposed forward work program and resource estimates that emerge are considered by the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC). The statistical work program is then finalised, incorporating the advice provided by ASAC.

The forward work program is published every year in hard copy, and is also available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au).

Audit and risk management

The ABS Risk Management Framework and Guidelines provide a mechanism for monitoring and identifying shifts in the risk exposure and the emergence of new risks.

ABS senior management are closely involved in monitoring and managing enterprise risks. These are risks that are strategic in nature and have the potential to significantly impact on the organisation.

At the operational level, the program of facilitated risk management workshops for key areas continued, to ensure that risk assessments for these areas were applied consistently. These workshops assist program directors to ensure that risks that have the potential to impact on a program's objectives are appropriately identified and managed.

The management of project risks is largely facilitated through the inclusion of risk management templates in the ABS Project Management Framework. Project managers are responsible for identifying and managing risks at the project level.

During 2006–07, the ABS participated in the Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking exercise and the Comcover Risk Management Assessment Service. The results of both activities will help provide direction to guide the ABS' approach to risk management in the future.

A work program of internal audits, endorsed by the Audit Committee and DHM, is developed annually to address performance, compliance and risk management issues. The internal audits are undertaken by an external audit provider. A complementary program of internal reviews of efficiency and effectiveness is also carried out annually by internal reviewers.

Internal audits undertaken during 2006–07 were in the areas of information technology training, procurement/tendering, project management, intellectual property policy, availability management of information technology systems, recruitment, pricing and business continuity.

There were two strategic reviews finalised in 2006–07 that will guide ABS directions in the future. A review of human resource processes and systems identified a need to rationalise and implement a new information technology system, which will incorporate payroll, human resource reporting and recruitment processes. A project team is scoping this proposal.

Another review was undertaken to map the *Financial Management and Accountability (FMA) Act 1997* requirements to the ABS' control framework, to identify any areas where attention was needed to ensure FMA compliance. The review gauged the ABS' position prior to the introduction of a new Certificate of Compliance process.

The external audit provider finalised a review to map the requirements of the FMA Act to the ABS' control framework, and to identify any areas where attention was needed to ensure FMA compliance. The results from this review will assist in identifying appropriate audits for future internal audit programs.

Fraud control

As required by the Commonwealth Fraud Control Guidelines, the Australian Statistician has certified that the ABS has prepared appropriate fraud risk assessments and fraud control plans, and has in place appropriate fraud prevention, detection, investigation, reporting and data collection procedures and processes that meet the specific needs of the ABS and comply with the guidelines.

Security of premises

The ABS relies on the trust and confidence of data providers to operate effectively and to fulfil the ABS mission statement.

The security of ABS premises and information technology environment is one aspect of maintaining that trust and confidence and is key to minimising risks in a number of areas, including fraud.

All ABS premises are physically secured against unauthorised access. Entry is through electronically controlled access systems activated by individually coded access cards, and monitored by closed circuit television. Particularly sensitive output data are subject to further physical security measures.

The ABS computer network has a secure gateway which only permits connection to some internet services. The secure gateway has been established in accordance with Australian Government guidelines and is subject to annual accreditation by the National Communications and Computer Security Advisory Authority, Defence Signals Directorate.

Internal access to ABS computing systems is based on personal identifiers that are password protected. Specific databases are only accessible to approved users. The computer systems are regularly monitored and usage audited. In 2006–07, there were no unauthorised computing systems access incidents.

Additional access control systems are used to protect any data designated to be sensitive. Access to sensitive data is only granted under the authority of area line management on the basis that access is required by the staff member to carry out their duties.

Included in the ABS strategic audit plan is an ongoing program of security audits and reviews of computer systems and the physical environment.

External scrutiny

The ABS is subject to external scrutiny from a range of bodies. These include ASAC, and other advisory groups, which comment on the ABS work program. For more information see Chapter 2 Overview of the ABS.

There are a range of bodies established by the Australian Government that can examine the operations of the ABS. In 2006–07, the ABS assisted in providing information to the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), the Commonwealth Ombudsman and parliamentary committees.

ABS assistance with ANAO studies is detailed below and ABS freedom of information obligations are discussed in Appendix 5. Information on submissions made to parliamentary committees, and documents tabled in Parliament by the ABS are available in the online appendix, outlined in Appendix 6.

In 2006–07, there were no adverse comments relating to the ABS from the ANAO, the Commonwealth Ombudsman, parliamentary committees, or courts or tribunals.

Auditor General

While no ANAO audits focused individually on the ABS in 2006–07, the ABS participated in two ANAO studies; *Contracts for Labour Hire in the Australian Public Service*, and *Superannuation Payments for Contractors Working for the Australian Government*.

The ABS was one of eight agencies selected to participate in the ANAO follow-up audit *Superannuation Payments for Contractors Working for the Australian Government*. The aim of the audit was to determine the extent to which the selected agencies had implemented the two recommendations from the previous audit. The ANAO concluded that, overall, the agencies selected had largely implemented the recommendations.

With regard to the ABS, the ANAO considered that the ABS' administrative arrangements reflected its low level of exposure to paying superannuation for contractors. It recommended that the ABS seek advice from the Australian Taxation Office about its liability to pay superannuation for a particular contractor identified in the audit.

Privacy

As an Australian Government department the ABS must comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, and the associated Information Privacy Principles, which govern the way personal information should be collected, stored, used and disclosed. These obligations cover information on staff, clients and respondents. They are in addition to the protection of confidentiality of data provided by respondents from the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. For more information see Chapter 11 Provider/respondent relationships.

The ABS has a privacy officer who, providing the perspective of a privacy advocate, advises on privacy issues internally, and monitors the external environment to keep up to date on privacy issues that could impact upon ABS operations.

The ABS maintains a close relationship with the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner (OFPC), advising the commissioner regularly of the ABS forward work program, attending OFPC quarterly privacy officer network meetings, and seeking advice on any new ABS initiatives about which privacy advocates may have concerns. Every year the ABS contributes to the commissioner's *Personal Information Digest*, which is published to inform the general public of the types of personal information that government departments hold.

On 15 January 2007 the ABS provided a submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) in response to their *Issues Paper: Review of Privacy*, which was issued in October 2006.

On 16 March 2007 officers from the ABS, including Deputy Australian Statistician Susan Linacre, met with representatives of the ALRC to discuss the ABS' submission to the review.

CHAPTER 19

Management of human resources

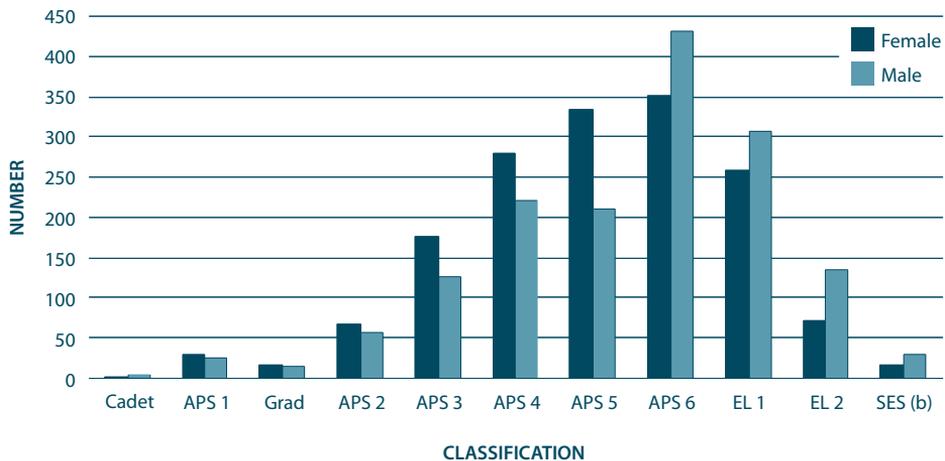
Introduction

The ABS depends on the combined efforts of capable and motivated employees to achieve its objectives. The ABS needs people who understand Australia's evolving information needs, and can assist the ABS to satisfy those needs; people who understand the changes to the environment in which the ABS operates, and can help the ABS to adapt to those changes; and people with both professional competence and a commitment to ABS values. As such, human resource management is a critical function within the ABS.

As at 30 June 2007, there were 3325 staff employed at the ABS under the *Public Service Act 1999*—1614 males and 1711 females. This includes operative, paid inoperative and unpaid inoperative staff. There were also 631 staff employed under Regulation 3 of the Statistics Regulations, and appointed as authorised officers for the purpose of the Census and Statistics Act under Section 16 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, to assist with data collection—mostly household survey interviewers. These numbers do not include the 40 000 temporary staff employed during the year as part of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

The tables below present the profile of ABS staff by employment classification and sex, and by location and type of employment for operative and paid inoperative staff. They exclude staff employed under the ABS Act, and 159 unpaid inoperative staff.

Graph 19.1: *Employment Classification by sex, 30 June 2007(a)*



(a) Operative and paid inoperative staff

(b) Includes Australian Statistician (statutory appointment)

Table 19.1: Number of ABS staff by location and status, at 30 June 2007(a)

	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
Central office (ACT)	1419	214	33	94	1760
NSW	226	34	23	28	311
Vic	206	35	15	6	262
Qld	135	18	10	1	164
WA	156	19	16	4	195
SA	137	37	3	6	183
Tas	90	15	10	2	117
NT	30	6	1	1	38
ACT	7	2	1	1	11
Data Processing Centre (Melbourne)	55	0	70	0	125
Total	2461	380	182	143	3166

(a) Includes operative and paid inoperative staff

The number of women in the Senior Executive Service (SES) in the ABS has continued to increase with women now constituting over one-third of the SES.

Table 19.2: Number of ABS SES by level, sex and year(a)

Year at 30 June	SES Level			Sex		Total
	1	2	3	Male	Female	
2004(r)	26	5	2	26	7	33
2005	26	6	2	26	8	34
2006	25	6	2	22	11	33
2007	28	5	2	22	13	35

(a) Includes only operative, substantive SES officers as at 30 June, but excludes the Australian Statistician, who is a statutory office holder appointed under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*

(r) Revised

CORRECTION—In the ABS' Annual Report 2005–06, the following incorrect statement was made on page 142, 'There were also 652 staff employed under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* to assist with data collection, mostly household survey interviewers.' The interviewers are employed under Regulation 3 of the Statistics Regulations, and appointed as authorised officers for the purpose of the Census and Statistics Act under Section 16 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

Australian Public Service values in the ABS

The Australian Public Service (APS) values are actively promoted and strongly adhered to throughout the ABS. At the highest level, the ABS Mission Statement reflects the apolitical nature of the APS as well as its commitment to the provision of comprehensive, accurate and timely advice.

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.

The ABS values are also fundamental to the ABS performing its role as an independent provider of statistical information, and directly relate to, and are congruent with, APS values. These values are long standing and strongly upheld by employees. They include:

- ◆ Relevance—all information provided by the ABS is relevant in terms of timeliness and content
- ◆ Service—understanding the ABS' service role, seeking to understand and assist its clients' statistical needs
- ◆ Integrity—data, analysis and interpretation is always apolitical with the highest standards of integrity applied
- ◆ access for all—the ABS ensures its statistics can be easily accessed and used by the community, business and governments
- ◆ professionalism—the professionalism of employees is actively developed to ensure the ABS has the technical and leadership skills required for the future, and
- ◆ trust of providers—the ABS maintains provider trust by adhering to the highest level of data protection and privacy standards.

The importance of the APS values is reflected and integrated in the management and operations of the ABS. For example, the obligations of employees to uphold the APS values and abide by the APS Code of Conduct are:

- ◆ promoted in training courses from induction through to senior management development programs
- ◆ actively applied through human resource processes
- ◆ supported by guidelines, policies and procedures which themselves take account of the APS values
- ◆ reflected throughout ABS corporate material which is readily accessible to employees through the ABS intranet, and
- ◆ promoted via posters and the distribution of bookmarks to all employees and new recruits.

In addition, a mandatory 'good corporate citizen' key result area (KRA) has been introduced for all performance agreements. This KRA articulates the expectation that all employees will model appropriate behaviour and conduct in work practices.

Recruitment

The ABS understands that people are the key to achieving its corporate goals. Therefore, effective recruitment continues to be a priority. As the ABS faces a tightening labour market and a changing workforce, there continues to be pressure to source and recruit capable staff. In 2006–07, the ABS continued to work toward improving its attraction strategies and recruitment processes with a particular focus on the graduate market, as well as strengthening its professionalism through enhancing recruitment capability across the organisation. The ABS is committed to increasing its ability to provide a recruitment and selection framework that will enhance the quality and effectiveness of ABS management and workforce.

Census collectors are key to ensuring the quality of the census coverage, and turnover of field staff during the census can impact on the quality of the census count. During the 2006 Census, in some areas, 10 per cent or more of field staff changed during the operation. Staff turnover can be caused by issues such as workload and suitability of remuneration. A review of field staff remuneration is to be conducted to identify how pay rates relate to market rates for similar activities.

The ABS is working progressively toward a strategic recruitment framework, with improved alignment of recruitment activities to business needs; further refinement of national recruitment business processes; and an environment that better supports and guides managers, employees and candidates through open, fair and transparent recruitment and selection processes. In particular, this year has seen achievements in:

- ◆ improved leadership of, and consistency in, ABS recruitment
- ◆ stronger partnerships with business areas across the ABS, which enabled improvements in timely and efficient recruitment services
- ◆ upgraded communication strategies, which are regular and systematic, between key ABS recruitment stakeholders
- ◆ improved graduate recruitment coordination and strategies including piloting an e-recruitment system
- ◆ enhanced recruitment training programs for selection committee members and recruitment stakeholders, and
- ◆ more use of a project management approach to bulk round recruitment exercises.

Graduate recruitment

Graduate recruitment forms a significant part of the ABS' succession planning and entry level recruitment strategy. Recruitment to the ABS' graduate program has become progressively more challenging as competition increases for a reducing pool of entrants. A particular focus in 2006–07 has been to further enhance the ability to attract and source a large pool of graduates by positioning the ABS as an employer of choice, and effectively promoting the ABS as an organisation with diverse career opportunities.

This year's campaign saw a 50 per cent increase in the number of applicants to the graduate program, in spite of the competitive market. To achieve this, the ABS undertook the following:

- ◆ introduced a graduate employment brand designed to make the ABS more visible in a busy, competitive graduate recruitment market. The concept depicted a more vibrant, youthful and contemporary workplace and was designed to maintain a link to the general recruitment brand and communicate the message that the ABS offers a diversity of work and opportunity for people with a range of qualifications. The graduate brand was integrated into all marketing and promotional material
- ◆ implemented an online advertising plan designed to provide maximum exposure of the ABS graduate campaign
- ◆ increased its presence at university career fairs
- ◆ redeveloped the graduate website with a focus on improving the visual impression of the site in terms of design, concept, appeal, first impression and layout, and improving the content of the website by reinforcing the message of a diverse range of career opportunities and providing information about the ABS, its graduate programs, opportunities and selection processes, and
- ◆ trialed an e-recruitment solution that fostered a more integrated organisational approach to graduate recruitment across the ABS, and facilitated a more timely, efficient and consistent graduate recruitment and selection process, and an improved recruitment experience for candidates.



The introduction of a graduate employment brand contributed to an increase in applicants to the ABS graduate program

Workforce shaping

Workforce shaping is a high priority for the ABS and is undertaken to ensure there are enough staff with the right capabilities, now and in the future, to meet the ABS' business requirements. The term 'workforce shaping', rather than 'workforce planning', has been adopted by the ABS as a way of differentiating the ABS' approach from other workforce planning processes and also to broaden the traditional definition applied to workforce planning.

Workforce shaping priorities were determined in conjunction with business areas and are based on business goals and objectives.

During 2006–07 the key workforce shaping achievements involved future capabilities; work capacity and sustainability; and retention.

Future capabilities

Future capabilities was a pilot project undertaken in the Population Statistics Group (PSG), with the aim of developing an approach that would help determine the future capabilities likely to be required of the PSG workforce, and assisting to build and develop such a workforce. An important objective of the pilot was to identify and measure the importance of capability gaps and to work collaboratively on identifying possible strategies to address those gaps. The approach successfully identified and prioritised a number of critical capabilities and work is continuing to assist the business area to prioritise and plan for its future workforce needs.

Workforce capacity and sustainability

Workforce capacity and sustainability was a pilot project undertaken with the International Accounts and Financial Statistics Branch in the Economic Statistics Group, with the aim of developing an approach that would assist managers to understand how they can more flexibly structure and adapt the ways that work is undertaken, to match the available labour market. The approach looked at issues relating to filling positions, workforce capacity and the ongoing sustainability of the workforce. The outcomes of the pilot revealed a number of broader human resource issues, which are being addressed by the management team at the local level and are being considered in the context of developing an integrated human resource strategy for the group. This will also inform national strategy development.

Retention

The ABS has been examining options and strategies to improve employee retention, with an initial focus on the retention of ABS graduates. This project included surveying former graduate employees who have recently left the ABS, and examining other data, such as the results of employee surveys, employee departure questionnaire, and holding focus groups of current graduates. This research revealed a range of factors impacting on graduate retention and highlighted key areas for improvement for both graduates and the wider ABS workforce.

All workforce shaping has assisted the ABS to place new and emerging people issues in context, and highlighted the need for an integrated human resource approach to meeting its future workforce and capability needs.

Consultation in the ABS

The ABS is committed to communication, cooperation, and effective consultation with employees and, where they choose, their representatives, about matters that affect their workplace. The ABS consultative framework includes line managers, who are important conduits for communication and consultation in the workplace. It also includes fourteen consultative forums, which provide employees with the opportunity to participate on a range of issues, employee representatives meeting with management as necessary, and an annual ABS National Forum, which includes participants from each consultative forum, management and employee organisations.

The 2007 National Forum was held in March. The key topics of discussion were:

- ◆ future directions for the ABS
- ◆ occupational health and safety
- ◆ relocation assistance
- ◆ environmental management system
- ◆ internal security procedures
- ◆ regional office work programs, and
- ◆ ABS staffing profile and workforce shaping initiatives underway.

Agreement making

The ABS has three collective agreements in place, which cover the majority of employees. These are the ABS Certified Agreement 2006–09, the ABS Interviewers Certified Agreement 2005–08, and the 2006 Census of Population and Housing Data Processing Centre Certified Agreement 2005–07. All the agreements were certified prior to the amendment of the Workplace Relations Act 1996 with the *Workplace Relations Amendment (WorkChoices) Act 2005*.

Processing for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing will be completed during 2007, after which the Data Processing Centre will be wound up, and the expired certified agreement will be terminated.

Preparatory work is underway with the aim of developing a new collective agreement for ABS interviewers in mid-2008.

Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) were redeveloped during the year to meet the requirements of the amended Workplace Relations Act, and are available to all ABS employees. Details of the number of staff covered by an AWA or a Certified Agreement at 30 June 2007 are as follows:

- ◆ There are thirty-six SES and ninety-three non-SES employees covered by an AWA.
- ◆ There are 3126 employees covered by the ABS Certified Agreement 2006–09.
- ◆ There are 631 employees covered by the ABS Interviewers Certified Agreement 2005–08.
- ◆ There are seventy employees covered by the 2006 Census of Population and Housing Data Processing Centre Certified Agreement 2005–07.

Table 19.3 Salary ranges by classification, at 30 June 2007(a)

Classification	Minimum (\$)	Maximum (\$)
Australian Public Service (APS) level		
APS1 (Adult)	33 996	37 397
APS2	38 476	42 323
APS3	43 821	48 202
APS4	49 331	54 263
APS5	55 023	60 525
APS6	62 586	68 844
Executive Officer Level (EL)		
EL1	76 596	84 255
EL2	96 839	106 522
Senior Executive Service (SES) level		
SES Band 1	117 521	144 021
SES Band 2	144 021	174 087
SES Band 3	174 087	na(b)

(a) The APS1 to EL2 salary ranges took effect from 28 June 2007. SES Band 1 to SES Band 3 salary ranges took effect from 1 January 2007

(b) Not applicable as there is no maximum level for this classification

The ABS salary system

The ABS Certified Agreement 2006–09 outlines the salary arrangements for ABS employees.

In 2006–07, salary increases for APS1 to EL2 employees were paid from 13 July 2006, with two components to the salary increases:

- ◆ a general salary increase of 4 per cent for all employees rated as effective or better, and
- ◆ a performance based increase
 - equivalent to a one pay point movement (2 per cent of the minimum of the relevant salary range) for all employees rated as effective or better, subject to the maximum of the salary range not being exceeded, and
 - for employees rated as outstanding, a one-off lump sum payment of 2 per cent of the minimum of the relevant salary range after the general salary increase was applied.

In July 2006, the minimum and maximum amounts of the salary ranges were increased by 4 per cent.

During 2006–07 the total amount paid as one-off lump sum bonus payments was \$471 148. It was paid to 358 employees.

Table 19.4 shows the performance pay component of the salary increases paid in 2006–07, including pay point movements and bonus payments.

Table 19.4 Performance pay by level [table heading]

Classification	Number	Aggregate (\$)	Average (\$)
Australian Public Service (APS) level			
APS1	7	1 971	282
APS2	27	3 720	138
APS3	324	203 280	627
APS4	535	376 435	704
APS5	524	437 956	836
APS6	798	678 249	850
Executive Officer Level (EL)			
EL1	487	392 200	805
EL2	166	188 971	1138
Senior Executive Service (SES) level			
SES1, SES2, SES3	40	100 648	2516
Total	2908	2 383 430	

Reward and recognition

The ABS operates a Recognition and Reward Scheme, which recognises exceptional one-off achievements by individuals and work groups. Rewards may be made in the form of certificates, hospitality (such as work group lunches), prepaid vouchers and cash bonuses. Total ABS expenditure for the scheme in 2006–07 was \$110 342.30.

Learning and development

Learning and development activities across the ABS are designed and undertaken to enhance organisational capabilities, ensuring that the ABS can respond to business challenges. Staff training attendance over the past twelve months has dropped slightly from an average of 5.6 training days in 2005–06 to 4.7 days in 2006–07. A number of new training courses were introduced, including Macro-economics, Estimation and Imputation for Business Surveys, Professional Presentations and Essential Writing Skills.

The Organisational, People and Learning System is now well established, with about 60 per cent of employees having completed their capability profile. The information collated in this system is now being used by divisions and regions to determine training needs and to develop staff utilisation strategies. An awareness campaign was prepared in 2006–07 and was rolled out in 2007. As a result of this strategy, it is expected that a greater understanding of the overall capabilities and needs of the ABS will become more evident. This will then enable better planning and delivery of learning and development programs.

Table 19.5 ABS staff training(a)

	Total ABS operative staff(b)	Attendance days	Average training days
2002–03	2909	14 797	5.1
2003–04	2800	10 431	3.7
2004–05	2630	12 562	4.8
2005–06	2865	16 163(c)	5.6
2006–07	3065	14 264(d)	4.7

(a) Excludes on-the-job training

(b) Comprises full-time and part-time staff at their full-time equivalent

(c) The 2005–06 total was revised down slightly from last year due to improved data capture in the new OPALS system

(d) Excludes Census Data Processing Centre training

The current ABS Certified Agreement articulates that the ABS is committed to providing opportunities for all employees to develop and enhance their skills and qualifications to meet current and future skill requirements, in line with corporate goals and individual career development. As part of this commitment, changes to assisted study leave were introduced in 2006–07, and Studybank was replaced with the Study Support Program. The most significant changes were an automated application process and the introduction of some financial assistance to students.

Statistical skills continue to be further developed through programs conducted in partnership with a number of universities, including the Australian National University, the University of Wollongong, the University of Queensland and Adelaide University. In addition, negotiations are underway to further strengthen ties with the universities to provide greater access to statistical and mathematical courses for ABS officers.

In 2006, the ABS conducted a joint tender process with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to secure a new panel of training providers. The panel is now in place and has enabled the ABS to secure the services of a range of companies to deliver on its diverse requirements, including leadership, management, supervision, project management, writing skills, and facilitate forward work planning days.

Occupational health and safety

The ABS is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace, and meeting its responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (OHS Act) and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRC Act). The ABS continues to honour its commitments under the ABS Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Agreement, and under a statement of commitment with Comcare that aims to significantly improve OHS outcomes by 2012.



ABS Health and Safety Week 2006 proved very popular, with high participation in all offices

A dedicated section in the ABS central office, complemented by representatives in all regional offices, ensures the requirements of the OHS Act and the SRC Act are met. A network of OHS committees is the vehicle for consultation on OHS issues affecting staff. Following recent changes to the OHS Act, the ABS has revised its Health and Safety Management Arrangements, to be implemented in late 2007.

In 2006–07, forty-four employees were selected or elected as Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) under the OHS Act, with most receiving training during the year.

There were eight notifiable accidents/dangerous occurrences reported to Comcare in 2006–07.

Investigations

During 2006–07, no Comcare OHS investigations were undertaken in the ABS and no provisional improvement notices, improvement notices or prohibition notices were issued.

Workplace injuries and illness

The ABS continued to invest in a risk management approach to the prevention of work-related illness and injuries. Key features of this approach included:

- ◆ the annual national workplace inspection program involving OHS inspections of all ABS workplaces
- ◆ increased employee awareness and compliance reporting of hazards in the workplace
- ◆ investigations of accident, incidents and near misses in the workplace, and
- ◆ immediate preventative interventions to address pain, discomfort or other signs of potential injury reported by employees.

A comparison of workers' compensation claims for the periods 2001–02 to 2006–07 is detailed in Table 19.6. The increased incidence of claims in 2006–07 is largely due to 108 claims resulting from the 2006 Census enumeration.

Table 19.6: ABS premium group claims incidence (number)

Financial year	Number of claims
2001–02	315(a)
2002–03	120
2003–04	114
2004–05	100
2005–06	93(b)
2006–07	203(c)

(a) Includes 203 claims from the 2001 Census

(b) includes seven claims from 2006 Census

(c) includes 108 claims from 2006 Census

Rehabilitation

The ABS implements early intervention and rehabilitation in both compensable and non-compensable cases. Training for ABS rehabilitation case managers and OHS coordinators was provided during the year to enhance ABS rehabilitation performance. Training for managers has been improved by upgrading OHS modules of ABS management courses.

The ABS received a commendation in the 'Leadership in Injury Prevention and Management' category of the Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission Safety Awards, which were presented on 18 October 2006. The award recognised greatly improved outcomes in injury rates, average cost of injuries, unscheduled absence rates, and a reduced workers' compensation premium.

Comcare premium

Improved injury prevention and management strategies, including early intervention as a high priority in preceding years, has resulted in the ABS workers' compensation premium for 2007–08 being approximately \$750 000 less than initially advised. Comcare provided notification that the ABS' premium rate for 2007–08 has been set at 1.67 per cent of total salary (including GST). The details of the ABS and the agency pool average premium rates are contained in Table 19.7. Continued efforts by all ABS offices to implement effective injury prevention and management strategies is necessary to achieve a downwards revision to the 2007–08 premium rate, as well as a reduction to future premiums.

Table 19.7: Comcare workers' compensation premium rate (percentage of wage and salary expenditure)

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
ABS	1.33	1.78	1.58	1.53	1.67
Agency pool average	1.43	1.67	1.77	1.77	1.55

Achievements

Measures taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees during 2006-07 included:

- ◆ continual review and development of the ABS' OHS policy framework based on risk management principles
- ◆ education and awareness of employees and managers on their OHS responsibilities, preventing injuries and OHS risk management
- ◆ conduct of the second annual National Workplace Inspection Program which resulted in greater awareness by employees and managers of their OHS roles and responsibilities, identified major hazards and enabled risk mitigation strategies to be effectively implemented
- ◆ use and continual improvement of systems to promote early intervention and improve the management of rehabilitation in the ABS
- ◆ continued promotion of health and fitness across the ABS, and
- ◆ implementation of recent legislative changes in the OHS Act and SRC Acts into ABS business practices and processes.

CHAPTER 20

Management of information technology

Introduction

Information technology is fundamental to the ABS fulfilling its mission of leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service. The effective management of information technology allows the ABS to increase access to statistics, ensure the security of sensitive data and statistics, and provide an effective statistical service.

The Technology Services Division works closely with all areas of the ABS, and uses advances in information technology and business improvement techniques to enhance the capability, efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. The division also provides a nationwide computing and communications infrastructure to support the ABS in all its locations including central office, regional offices and for the interviewer workforce.

Under the guidance of the Information Resource Management Committee (see Chapter 19 Management of human resources), the ABS has continued to manage information technology facilities effectively and efficiently. The Technology Services Division contributes in these key areas:

- ◆ supporting an effective statistical work program, with the appropriate technology
- ◆ evolving the ABS technology environment and technology services to enhance productivity and innovation
- ◆ supporting professional practice in areas such as project management, enterprise architecture, business process improvement and capital planning to maximise the success of ABS endeavours
- ◆ strategic planning for the technology, and approaches to technology that the ABS will need, and
- ◆ collaborating with other organisations in relation to technology.

There have been a number of key achievements relating to the successful processing of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, including:

- ◆ completion of the first eCensus, in partnership with IBM, enabling people to complete their 2006 Census online (for which ABS received an information technology industry award, an eGovernment Award for Excellence; and was a finalist for a Computer World Honours)
- ◆ use of SMS and voice technology to increase the responsiveness of field staff to respondents requests, and
- ◆ development and release of new web-based dissemination facilities for census outputs.

In addition, the Technology Services Division has assisted in the advancement of other areas of the ABS statistical work in the following areas:

- ◆ automated processing of a record number of returns from the 2005–06 Agricultural Census
- ◆ establishment of metadata services to increase consistency across surveys
- ◆ broad-scale reuse of common infrastructure solutions to meet the processing requirements of business surveys
- ◆ increased automation of statistical techniques such as editing, estimation and imputation, and
- ◆ enhancing the capture of quality metrics to aid the analysis of statistics.



Scanners used to read census forms at the Data Processing Centre in Melbourne

In relation to professional practice, the ABS has adopted a Business Process Management Framework for achieving improvements in core statistical and business processes. The framework provides effective tools for business improvement and reengineering. As part of this, the ABS has increased the use of business activity monitoring to focus efficiency initiatives by measuring processes and identifying areas needing further work.

The ABS has recently developed a Technology Research Portfolio to ensure the organisation is well placed to understand technology opportunities and challenges. Business drivers and emerging technologies are matched and explored to understand the potential for use in future systems.

The ABS continues to lead collaborative efforts on the National Data Network in partnership with a number of agencies. The National Data Network platform enables sharing and integration of statistical data relevant to policy and research. It uses open source technologies and approaches to maximise opportunities for collaborative development. For more information on the National Data Network see Chapter 3 ABS and the national statistical service.

An increased focus on whole-of-government initiatives has seen the ABS as an active participant in the associated committees and forums. It has made strong contributions and is aligning its own activities with these initiatives. The ABS also hosted visits from a number of statistical organisations in other countries to share approaches in managing information technology and contributed to forums such as those of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

eCensus

Use of the eCensus application, which was designed, built and hosted for the ABS by IBM Australia, peaked between 8 pm and 9 pm on census night, 8 August 2006, during which time more than 72 000 online forms were received. In the 24-hour period of turnover August, the eCensus delivered more than 12.5 million page views.

Despite as many as 55 000 households logging on simultaneously at 8.47 pm on census night, the eCensus application delivered 100 per cent availability through the census' most busy period, from Saturday 5 August to Sunday 13 August. Average page response times remained below one second within the hosted environment.

Overall, 776 000 census forms were submitted electronically, representing 9 per cent of the estimated number of dwellings in Australia.

CHAPTER 21

Management of assets

The ABS' assets are integral to the cost-effective conduct of its business, and are part of the combination of resources required to enable delivery of services. This chapter outlines the asset management principles, including the approach to purchasing, used by the ABS during 2006–07.

The ABS directly manages its non-financial assets in accordance with the Chief Executive Instructions and Australian Accounting Standards. Most of the assets are intangible (internally generated software), valued at \$95.4 million in 2006–07, with tangible assets (property plant and equipment) forming the remainder, valued at \$51.3 million in 2006–07. Tangible asset values are maintained with the assistance of an independent valuer.

Asset management in the ABS

Principles

Overall the ABS asset management principles are designed to ensure that asset management practices and decisions support the service delivery requirements and business demands of the organisation, and that capital expenditure decisions address the full life cycle costs, benefits and risks of the assets.

The ABS' approach to asset management encompasses the following principles:

- ◆ asset management activities are undertaken within an integrated government asset management framework
- ◆ service delivery needs guide asset management practices and decisions
- ◆ asset planning and management are integrated with corporate and business plans, as well as budgetary and reporting processes
- ◆ capital expenditure decisions are based on evaluations of alternatives that take into account full life cycle costs, benefits and risks of assets, and
- ◆ ownership, control, accountability, and reporting requirements for assets are established, clearly communicated and implemented.

Strategic issues

The major strategic issue currently being addressed with respect to ABS assets is the effective management of its information and technology assets. During 2006–07 the ABS conducted an internal Capital Strategy Review to evaluate a range of emerging long-term issues identified within the asset portfolio. The next stage will be to identify options to address those issues and to improve longer-term strategic planning in relation to asset replacement.

The current strategies to manage this investment are:

- ◆ strategic direction and oversight by a senior executive committee
- ◆ annual development and quarterly monitoring of corporate information technology budget and work program
- ◆ enhancement and/or replacement of existing software and hardware, on a rolling program, where justified by business demands
- ◆ use of the ABS project management framework and governance arrangements for projects involving information technology
- ◆ use of an active internal auditing program, and
- ◆ use of internal cost recovery mechanisms to ensure that full costs are attributed and balanced against benefits.

Asset measurement

The ABS maintains an asset register to address management, statutory reporting and user requirements.

The ABS' assets are an integral element in the conduct of its business, and are part of the combination of resources required to enable cost-effective delivery of services.

The asset register of the ABS underpins planning policies, analysis of financial programs, capitalisation, and reviews of performance against defined objectives.

For recognition as an asset, the ABS has an expenditure capitalisation threshold of \$2000 for general assets and \$1000 for information and technology assets, including software. Assets expenditure greater than, or equal to, these amounts are capitalised and recorded on the assets register.

Purchasing

Procurement in the ABS is centrally coordinated, providing procurement services and contract management support to the whole organisation. Through the centralisation of skills and support, all areas of the ABS have access to expertise. The ABS uses procurement methods consistent with Australian Government and ABS procurement policies, resulting in value for money when acquiring goods and services.

Purchasing and competitive tendering and contracting

The ABS undertakes a wide variety of procurement and contracting activities, with the majority of purchases classed as low value and low complexity.

The ABS conducts its procurement and contracting activities in accordance with its Chief Executive Instructions and the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines. The ABS advertises an annual procurement plan on AusTender, and the plan is reviewed and updated as required throughout the year. The ABS has a centralised area of expertise, which provides procurement and contracting support to operational areas, and provides direct support for more complex procurement projects. Information on procurement policy and practices is disseminated to staff through an internal procurement portal.

Through the use of efficient processes and effective application of the ABS and Australian Government policies and principles, the ABS is satisfied that its approach to market testing and contracting is highly effective, resulting in value for money outcomes for the ABS. The ABS continues to invest in developing procurement skills and reviewing processes to ensure they remain efficient and contribute to value for money outcomes.

The ABS has not undertaken any competitive tendering and contracting activities during the year that have resulted in contracting out government activities previously performed by the ABS. Information on expenditure on contracts and consultancies is also available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au).

Exempt contracts

In 2006–07, the ABS did not exempted any contracts from publication by AusTender, under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

CHAPTER 22

Access for people with disabilities

Commonwealth Disability Strategy

Under the Commonwealth Disability Strategy framework, the ABS has developed the ABS Disability Action Plan as a public statement of commitment to provide:

- ◆ access to ABS products and services for clients with disabilities, and
- ◆ equal employment opportunity for people with disabilities.

The Disability Action Plan consolidates policies and programs and is a mechanism to assist in the prevention of discrimination on the basis of disability. The plan includes a checklist to assist all ABS employees prevent disability discrimination.

This section assesses the ABS' performance against the indicators set out in the Commonwealth Disability Strategy.

Table 22.1: Commonwealth Disability Strategy—provider role

Performance indicator	Assessment
<p>Providers have established mechanisms for quality improvement and assurance.</p>	<p>The ABS operates in accordance with the Australian Government Information Management Office guidelines relating to accessibility for visually impaired users and is working to ensure that the ABS website meets the requirements of the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.</p> <p>The ABS is committed to the development of a website that is accessible to people with vision impairment. However, due to technological limitations, it is not possible to make the website entirely accessible in a cost-effective manner. This limitation means that some tables, products, or parts of the website, may be less accessible to some visually impaired users.</p> <p>If any of the web products are not suitably accessible, the ABS will make arrangements for Vision Australia to translate the product into a more appropriate format. This service is provided on request and at no additional cost to the user.</p>
<p>Providers have an established service charter that specifies the roles of the provider and consumer and service standards which address accessibility for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>The Client Services Charter describes the relationship between the ABS and users of its products and services.</p> <p>A free service to convert data files into a suitable format is available for people with vision impairment.</p>

Performance indicator	Assessment
Complaints/grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, are in place to address concerns raised about performance.	The Client Services Charter outlines the complaints and grievance mechanisms in place to address concerns about the ABS' performance in providing services.

Table 22.2: Commonwealth Disability Strategy—employer role

Performance indicator	Assessment
Employment policies, procedures and practices comply with the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> .	<p>All ABS employment policies, procedures and practices have been developed in line with the Australian Public Service Values and comply with the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>. The principles of the Act, in terms of eliminating discrimination, promoting equity and responding to the diverse needs of the Australian community, are values upheld in the ABS Corporate Plan, the ABS Workplace Diversity Program and the ABS Certified Agreement.</p> <p>ABS policies produced specifically to comply with Act are the Reasonable Workplace Adjustment Guidelines and the Disability Action Plan.</p>
Recruitment information for potential job applicants is available in accessible formats on request.	<p>ABS job vacancies are advertised in the Public Service Gazette and on the ABS website.</p> <p>The ABS website provides recruitment material and corporate information for potential applicants in RTF and PDF formats. The ABS application cover sheet, which applicants are required to return with their applications, contains provisions for requesting any additional requirements in the event of interviews, such as interpreters and other aids.</p>
Agency recruiters and managers apply the principle of 'reasonable adjustment'.	<p>ABS corporate manuals and workplace diversity databases have information on reasonable adjustment and the selection process. Selection panels are made aware of this information and the processes for its application.</p> <p>Information gathered from the ABS application cover sheet enables the ABS selection panel to seek further information with regard to possible reasonable adjustment requirements for the interview situation.</p> <p>The occupational health and safety representatives undertake a workplace assessment to assess any special needs, and to discuss and assist in implementing, as appropriate, reasonable adjustment strategies with the relevant supervisor on commencement of employment.</p>

<p>Training and development programs consider the needs of staff with disabilities and include information on disability issues as they relate to the content of the program.</p>	<p>The ABS' learning and development programs take into consideration any special needs of employees. In accordance with the disability strategy, all training and development activities are: learner centred; designed using an instructional design phase that considers the diverse needs and learning styles of trainees; and delivered and event managed with activities that provide for the reasonable adjustment requirements of trainees, such as specific hearing, language/ translator and mobility issues. Activities are also designed to include specific components on disability, and reasonable adjustment in management and leadership development aspects of programs.</p>
<p>Complaints and grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, are in place to address issues and concerns raised by staff.</p>	<p>The ABS has several mechanisms in place to assist employees to resolve issues. These include support networks to assist staff and a well-defined process to internally resolve workplace issues. The ABS also provides information to employees about external appeal mechanisms.</p> <p>In addition to more formal mechanisms set out in the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i>, the ABS has agreed internal procedures for resolving workplace issues, which have been established under the ABS Certified Agreement 2006–09.</p>

The ABS was nominated externally for two Diversity in the Workplace awards in 2006. The first award was received for appreciation and recognition by an external agency that assists people with disabilities find work. This award was for the ongoing commitment by the ABS to employ people with a disability, and for its continued support in doing so over a number of years.

The ABS was also nominated for the 2006 Prime Minister's Employer of the Year Awards, recognising excellence in the employment of people with a disability. Although the ABS did not win in its category, recognition was given to the ABS as being one of only a few government departments that actively seeks work opportunities for people with disabilities.

CHAPTER 23

Ecological and environmental sustainability

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* requires agencies to report on aspects of its performance as it relates to ecologically sustainable development. The ABS has two key roles with respect to this issue. The first of these is in relation to the ABS' responsibility for providing statistics on the environment and environmental issues to enable informed decision making. The second role is with respect to ABS operations and its impact on the environment, and the steps being taken by the ABS to minimise that impact.

In February 2007, the ABS' South Australia office relocated to ANZ House, a five-star green-star building. Green star ratings provide a guide for the property industry to reduce the environmental impact of buildings and to improve the health of the staff occupying the building. ANZ House is currently the most energy-efficient building in Adelaide and provides an excellent work environment for staff. The fit out offers water and energy-saving initiatives, materials with a low environmental impact and a design that maximises natural light and focuses on providing fresher air.



ANZ House, South Australia

The ABS response to the five components of sub-section 516A (6) as required by the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is described below.

Table 23.1: Assessment against components of ecological and environmental responsibility

Component assessment	ABS actions
<p>How do the activities of the organisation, and the administration of legislation by the organisation, accord with the principles of ecologically sustainable development?</p>	<p>The ABS' role is to provide a high-quality statistical service to the government and the community. The ABS operates primarily in an office-based environment and is progressively moving from paper to electronic products.</p> <p>To reduce paper consumption the ABS continues to increase the number of publications available electronically, while reducing the number of titles available. There has been a 25 per cent decrease in the number of publication titles printed, and a 31 per cent decrease in the number of publication copies printed, between 2005–06 and 2006–07. The availability of free publications on the ABS website continues to contribute to further reductions in demand for hard copies.</p> <p>From 1 January 2006 ABS ceased creating paper records of its general business activities, except financial and personnel records, and primarily manages its business records by digital record-keeping. To assist with the management of these records, the ABS has developed a knowledge framework and is in the process of configuring its technologies to facilitate automatic record-keeping. ABS' workgroup databases already include these automatic record-keeping facilities.</p> <p>In most procurement activities, the ABS has incorporated environmental clauses as part of the tender and evaluation process. Environmental considerations are also incorporated in the market testing process for new properties. Inclusion of the Government Green Lease Schedule in new tenancy agreements is now a leasing requirement.</p>
<p>How do the outcomes specified in a relevant Appropriations Act contribute to ecologically sustainable development?</p>	<p>The ABS receives appropriation for the purpose of informing the government on population, social and economic matters.</p> <p>The environment component of the ABS' economic statistics program collects and publishes information about environment and energy statistics, including environment accounts. The component is involved in the coordination of data collection, research and analysis, and implementation of international environmental accounting frameworks.</p> <p>During 2006–07, the ABS released a greatly increased range of publications relevant to environmental issues. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices</i> (cat. no. 4602.0) ◆ <i>Water Use on Australian Farms 2004–05</i> (cat. no. 4618.0) ◆ <i>Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends</i> (cat. no. 4613.0) ◆ <i>Water Account Australia 2004–05</i> (cat. no. 4610.0)

Component assessment	ABS actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Australian Social Trends</i> (cat. no. 4102.0) ◆ <i>Measures of Australia's Progress</i> (cat. no. 1370.0) ◆ <i>Year Book Australia</i> (cat. no. 1301.0) ◆ <i>Proposed Methodology for Producing Regional Water Use Estimates</i> (cat. no. 4610.0.55.001) ◆ <i>Experimental Estimates of Regional Water Use, Australia</i> (cat. no. 4610.0.55.002) ◆ <i>Water Access Entitlements, Allocations and Trading, 2003–04</i> (cat. no. 4610.0.55.003) ◆ <i>Research Paper: An Experimental Monetary Water Account for Australia</i> (cat. no. 4616.0.55.004) ◆ <i>Research Paper: A Methodology for Estimating Regional Agricultural Water Use</i> (cat. no. 4616.0.55.001) ◆ <i>Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms, 2004–05</i> (cat. no. 4620.0) ◆ <i>Domestic Water and Energy Use, New South Wales</i> (cat. no. 4621.1) ◆ <i>Domestic Use of Water and Energy, WA</i> (cat. no. 4652.5) ◆ <i>Characteristics of Australia's Irrigated Farms, 2000–01 to 2003–04</i> (cat. no. 4623.0) ◆ <i>Environment and Energy News</i> (cat. no. 4653.0). <p>During 2006–07, the ABS developed and despatched a survey of natural resource management activities of farmers. The results of these surveys will be published by mid-2008.</p>
<p>What is the effect of the organisation's activities on the environment?</p>	<p>The operation of the ABS contributes to a range of impacts on the environment through its use of electricity, petrol, water, paper and other materials consumed, and through its generation of waste.</p>
<p>What measures are taken by the organisation to minimise the impact of its activities on the environment?</p>	<p>The ABS is continually improving practices to minimise the effect of its operations on the environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ committing resources to develop an Environmental Management System to operate from 2007–08 onwards ◆ reviewing energy usage and management to ensure the ABS will meet the new Australian Government targets ◆ consuming 'green energy', wherever possible, eg 10 per cent of energy consumed in the ABS central office is 'green energy' ◆ considering property location and proximity to transport hubs during property market testing ◆ incorporating amenities during fit out that encourage staff to save water, cycle to work, and to recycle

Component assessment	ABS actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ installing dual flush toilets in the central office and waterless urinals in the ABS SA office, to assist in the reduction of water consumption ◆ using re-manufactured and recycled cartridges for photocopiers, faxes and printers, and recycling used printer cartridges, wherever possible ◆ recycling paper, bottles, cans and cardboard products in all offices ◆ using paper with a 10 per cent recycled content in ABS central office and exploring opportunities to increase the recycled content ◆ increasing the number of publications available electronically, introducing digital record-keeping, and computer-assisted interviewing to replace paper forms ◆ heavily weighting energy ratings, when making purchasing decisions for whitegoods ◆ considering the Greenhouse Vehicle Guide (GVG) when leasing government vehicles—in 2006–07, 50 per cent of ABS fleet vehicles had a GVG score of 10.5 or better. The ABS has positively contributed to the Australian Government reaching its target, and ◆ keeping staff informed of good practices.
<p>What are the mechanisms for reviewing and increasing the effectiveness of these measures?</p>	<p>ABS engaged a team of consultants to conduct a strategic property review in 2006. This review included environmental issues. From the review came a number of recommendations, which the ABS will implement over the coming years, with a view to achieving energy savings and improving environmental performance.</p> <p>Resources have been committed and work started on developing the ABS Environmental Management System that complies with ISO14001. Benchmarking of a number of areas of environmental concern has been undertaken. Once operational the Environmental Management System will allow the ABS to monitor and review the effectiveness of its environmental program on an ongoing basis.</p>



Section VII
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Treasurer

Matters relating to the Electronic Presentation of the Audited Financial Statements

This auditor's report relates to the financial statements published on the website of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the year ended 30 June 2007. The Australian Statistician is responsible for the integrity of the web site.

This auditor's report refers only to the primary statements, schedules and notes named below. It does not provide an opinion on any other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the audited financial statements.

If users of this report are concerned with the inherent risks arising from electronic data communications they are advised to refer to the hard copy of the audited financial statements in the Australian Bureau of Statistics' annual report.

Scope

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the year ended 30 June 2007, which comprise: a Statement by the Australian Statistician and Chief Financial Officer; income statement; balance sheet; statement of changes in equity; cash flow statement; schedules of commitments and contingencies; a summary of significant accounting policies; and other explanatory notes.

The Responsibility of the Chief Executive for the Financial Statements

The Australian Statistician is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with the Finance Minister's Orders made under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* and the Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations). This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

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19 National Circuit BARTON ACT 2600
Phone (02) 6203 7300 Fax (02) 6203 7777

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on my audit. My audit has been conducted in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal controls relevant to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the Australian Statistician, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting the audit, I have followed the independence requirements of the Australian National Audit Office, which incorporate the ethical requirements of the Australian accounting profession.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- (a) have been prepared in accordance with the Finance Minister's Orders made under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, and the Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations); and
- (b) give a true and fair view of the matters required by the Finance Minister's Orders including the Australian Bureau of Statistics' financial position as at 30 June 2007 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended.

Australian National Audit Office



Carla Jago
Executive Director
Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra

3 August 2007

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS
STATEMENT BY THE AUSTRALIAN STATISTICIAN AND
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2007 are based on properly maintained financial records and give a true and fair view of the matters required by the Finance Minister's Orders made under the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.



Brian Pink
Australian Statistician

3 August 2007



Mark Whybrow
Chief Financial Officer

3 August 2007

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

INCOME STATEMENT for the year ended 30 June 2007

INCOME	Notes	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
Revenue			
Revenues from Government	3A	414,431	318,622
Goods and services	3B	22,968	19,634
Other revenue		533	583
Total revenue		437,932	338,839
Gains			
Net gains from disposal of assets	3C	130	-
Other gains	3D	134	114
Total gains		264	114
TOTAL INCOME		438,196	338,953
EXPENSES			
Employee expenses	4A	294,681	209,885
Suppliers	4B	107,513	99,135
Depreciation and amortisation	4C	33,443	28,713
Finance costs	4D	435	537
Write-down and impairment of assets	4E	1,304	67
Net losses from disposal of assets	3C	-	413
Other expenses		219	180
TOTAL EXPENSES		437,595	338,930
SURPLUS		601	23

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

BALANCE SHEET

as at 30 June 2007

	Notes	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
ASSETS			
Financial Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5A	6,435	8,816
Trade and other receivables	5B	8,509	7,658
Accrued revenue		497	209
Total Financial Assets		15,441	16,683
Non-Financial Assets			
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	6A,6B	51,312	54,068
Intangibles	6C	95,380	91,985
Inventories	6D	26	56
Other non-financial assets	6E	7,231	7,905
Total Non-Financial Assets		153,949	154,014
TOTAL ASSETS		169,390	170,697
LIABILITIES			
Payables			
Suppliers	7A	5,876	10,888
Unearned revenue	7B	1,954	5,756
Total Payables		7,830	16,644
Interest Bearing Liabilities			
Loans	8	6,245	7,585
Total Interest Bearing Liabilities		6,245	7,585
Lease Incentives			
Lease incentives	9	26,729	21,011
Total Lease Incentives		26,729	21,011
Provisions			
Employee provisions	10A	67,720	66,259
Other provisions	10B	1,000	1,475
Total Provisions		68,720	67,734
TOTAL LIABILITIES		109,524	112,974
NET ASSETS		59,866	57,723
EQUITY			
Contributed equity		14,033	12,491
Reserves		16,370	16,370
Retained surpluses		29,463	28,862
TOTAL EQUITY		59,866	57,723
Current assets		19,909	21,556
Non-current assets		149,481	149,141
Current liabilities		71,193	78,239
Non-current liabilities		38,331	34,735

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

for the year ended 30 June 2007

	Notes	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Goods and services		20,378	27,612
Appropriations		416,100	318,500
Net GST received		8,622	8,283
Total cash received		<u>445,100</u>	<u>354,395</u>
Cash used			
Employees		(293,359)	(211,511)
Suppliers		(116,670)	(104,916)
Finance costs		(435)	(514)
Total cash used		<u>(410,464)</u>	<u>(316,941)</u>
Net cash from operating activities	11	<u>34,636</u>	<u>37,454</u>
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment		665	79
Total cash received		<u>665</u>	<u>79</u>
Cash used			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(14,762)	(20,118)
Purchase of intangibles		(21,130)	(21,294)
Total cash used		<u>(35,892)</u>	<u>(41,412)</u>
Net cash (used by) investing activities		<u>(35,227)</u>	<u>(41,333)</u>
FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Appropriations – contributed equity		-	994
Lease incentives received		-	3,448
Total cash received		<u>-</u>	<u>4,442</u>
Cash used			
Repayment of debt		(1,790)	(1,261)
Repayment of lease liability		-	-
Total cash used		<u>(1,790)</u>	<u>(1,261)</u>
Net cash from or (used by) financing activities		<u>(1,790)</u>	<u>3,181</u>
Net increase or (decrease) in cash held		<u>(2,381)</u>	<u>(698)</u>
Cash at the beginning of the reporting period		8,816	9,514
Cash at the end of the reporting period	5A	<u>6,435</u>	<u>8,816</u>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

as at 30 June 2007

	Accumulated Results		Asset Revaluation Reserve		Contributed Equity/Capital		Total Equity	
	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
Opening Balance at 1 July	28,862	28,839	16,370	6,062	12,491	11,497	57,723	46,398
Income and Expense								
Revaluation adjustment	-	-	-	10,308	-	-	-	10,308
<i>Subtotal income and expenses recognised directly in equity</i>	-	-	-	10,308	-	-	-	10,308
Net Operating Result	601	23	-	-	-	-	601	23
Total income and expenses	601	23	-	10,308	-	-	601	10,331
Transactions with Owners								
<i>Contributions by Owners</i>								
Appropriation (equity injection)	-	-	-	-	1,542	994	1,542	994
Sub-total Transactions with Owners	-	-	-	-	1,542	994	1,542	994
Transfers between equity components								
Closing balance at 30 June	29,463	28,862	16,370	16,370	14,033	12,491	59,866	57,723

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

SCHEDULE OF COMMITMENTS

as at 30 June 2007

	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
BY TYPE		
Capital Commitments		
Infrastructure, plant and equipment ¹	2,400	1,601
Total Capital Commitments	2,400	1,601
Other Commitments		
Operating leases ²	220,629	231,851
Other commitments	2,924	6,850
Total Other Commitments	223,553	238,701
Commitments Receivable	(20,541)	(21,847)
Net Commitments by type	205,412	218,455
BY MATURITY		
Capital Commitments		
One year or less	2,400	1,601
Total Capital Commitments	2,400	1,601
Operating Lease Commitments		
One year or less	25,484	28,455
From one to five years	93,926	91,950
Over five years	101,219	111,446
Total Operating Lease Commitments	220,629	231,851
Other Commitments		
One year or less	2,924	6,850
From one to five years	-	-
Over five years	-	-
Total Other Commitments	2,924	6,850
Commitments Receivable	(20,541)	(21,847)
Net Commitments by Maturity	205,412	218,455

NB: Commitments are GST inclusive where relevant.

¹ Plant and equipment commitments are primarily contracts for purchases of furniture and fittings for a new building.

² Operating leases included are effectively non-cancellable and comprise:

Nature of lease	General description of leasing arrangement
Leases for office accommodation	Lease payments are subject to annual increases in line with rental agreements. The initial periods of office accommodation leases are still current and each may be renewed for up to five years at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) option, following a one-off adjustment of rentals to current market levels.
Agreements for the provision of motor vehicles to senior executive officers	No contingent rentals exist. There are no renewal or purchase options available to the ABS.

The above schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

SCHEDULE OF CONTINGENCIES

as at 30 June 2007

Contingent liabilities	Guarantees		Claims for damages/costs		Total	
	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
Balance from previous period		-	3,987	4,987	3,987	4,987
New	-	-	-	-	-	-
Re-measurement	-	-	727	(1,000)	727	(1,000)
Liabilities crystallised	-	-	-	-	-	-
Obligations expired	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Contingent Liabilities	-	-	4,714	3,987	4,714	3,987

The ABS currently has four agreements for the leasing of premises which have clauses requiring the ABS to restore the premises to their original condition at the conclusion of the lease. The ABS has assessed the likelihood of economic loss under the makegood clauses on a lease by lease basis. As noted in Note 1.10 only one of these agreements meets the probability test of AASB 137 and the ABS has made a provision to reflect the present value of these obligations. The remaining three agreements are disclosed in the above note as contingent liabilities. The present value of these amounts has been obtained through valuation as at 30 June 2007.

Details of each class of contingent liabilities and assets, including those not included above because they cannot be quantified, are disclosed in Note 12: Contingent Liabilities.

The ABS does not have any contingent assets as at 30 June 2007.

The above schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the year ended 30 June 2007**

Note 1:	Summary of Significant Accounting Policies
Note 2:	Events After the Balance Sheet Date
Note 3:	Income
Note 4:	Operating Expenses
Note 5:	Financial Assets
Note 6:	Non-Financial Assets
Note 7:	Payables
Note 8:	Interest Bearing Liabilities
Note 9:	Lease Incentives
Note 10:	Provisions
Note 11:	Cash Flow Reconciliation
Note 12:	Contingent Liabilities and Assets
Note 13:	Executive Remuneration
Note 14:	Remuneration of Auditors
Note 15:	Average Staffing Levels
Note 16:	Financial Instruments
Note 17:	Appropriations
Note 18:	Special Accounts
Note 19:	Compensation and Debt Relief
Note 20:	Reporting of Outcomes

Note 1: Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

1.1 Objectives of the Australian Bureau of Statistics

The mission and outcome of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is to 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.

The ABS is structured to produce the aforementioned outcome through its economic statistics, and population and social statistics groups. Indirect costs for support services have been allocated to the economic, and population and social statistical areas in these financial statements.

ABS's assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses are those items that are controlled by the ABS and are used by the ABS to produce its outputs.

Administered items are those items that are controlled by the Government and managed or overseen by the ABS on behalf of the Government. The ABS does not administer any items on behalf of the Government.

Further information on ABS outcomes and outputs can be found in this Annual Report.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

The continued existence of the ABS in its present form, and with its present programs, is dependent on Government policy and on continuing appropriations by Parliament for the ABS' administration and programs.

1.2 Basis of Preparation of Financial Statements

The Financial Statements and notes are required by clause 1(b) of Schedule 1 to the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act) and are a general purpose financial report.

The statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- Finance Minister's Orders (FMOs), being the *Financial Management and Accountability Orders (Financial Statements for reporting periods ending on or after 1 July 2006)*; and
- Australian Accounting Standards issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board that apply for the reporting period.

The financial reports have been prepared on an accrual basis and are in accordance with historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities, which as noted, are at fair value, or amortised cost. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position.

The financial report is presented in Australian dollars and values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless disclosure of the full amount is specifically required.

Unless alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard, assets and liabilities are recognised in the Balance Sheet when, and only when, it is probable that future economic benefits will flow and the amounts of the assets or liabilities can be reliably measured. However, assets and liabilities arising under agreements equally proportionately unperformed are not recognised unless required by an Accounting Standard. Liabilities and assets that are unrecognised are reported in the Schedule of Commitments and the Schedule of Contingencies (other than unquantifiable or remote contingencies, which are reported at Note 12).

Unless alternative treatment is specifically required by an accounting standard, revenues and expenses are recognised in the Income Statement when, and only when, the flow, consumption or loss of economic benefits has occurred and can be reliably measured and expenses are recognised in the Income Statement when, and only when, the flow or consumption or loss of economic benefits has occurred and can be reliably measured.

1.3 Significant Accounting Judgements and Estimates

The ABS uses an estimation process for establishing the cost of Internally Generated Software (IGSW). Actual costs are measured and recorded for programmers and a rate of 49.58% is added to reflect non-programming staff costs directly attributable to IGSW. The 49.58% is based upon a sample of IGSW activity undertaken in 2000 and

reviewed in 2003. Another review is scheduled for 2007-08 which has the potential to change IGSW capitalisation policy in future reporting periods. (Refer Note 1.23)

1.4 Statement of Compliance

Australian Accounting Standards require a statement of compliance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) to be made where the financial report complies with these standards. Some Australian equivalents to IFRSs and other Australian Accounting Standards contain requirements specific to not-for-profit entities that are inconsistent with IFRS requirements. The ABS is a not-for-profit entity and has applied these requirements, so while this financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards including Australian Equivalents to International Financial Reporting Standards (AEIFRSs) it cannot make this statement.

Adoption of new Australian Accounting Standard requirements

No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the effective date in the current period.

The ABS is required to disclose Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations which have been issued, but are not yet effective that have not been adopted early. The following adopted requirements have resulted in a change to ABS' accounting policies, or have affected the amounts reported in the current or prior periods, or are estimated to have a financial affect in future reporting periods.

Effective requirement changes

The following amendments, revised standards or interpretations have become effective, but have had no financial impact, or do not apply to the operations of the ABS.

Amendments:

- 2005-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB's 1, 101, 124]
- 2005-6 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB 3]
- 2006-1 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB 121]
- 2006-3 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB 1045]

Interpretations:

- UIG 4 Determining whether an Arrangement contains a Lease
- UIG 5 Rights to Interests arising from Decommissioning, Restoration and Environmental Rehabilitation Funds
- UIG 7 Applying the Restatement Approach under AASB 129 Financial Reporting in Hyperinflationary Economies
- UIG 8 Scope of AASB 2
- UIG 9 Reassessment of Embedded Derivatives

Future Australian Accounting Standard requirements

The following new standards, amendments to standards, or interpretations have been issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board, but are effective for future

reporting periods. It is estimated that the impact of adopting these pronouncements when effective will have no material financial impact on future reporting periods.

Financial instrument disclosure

AASB 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures is effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2007 (the 2007-08 financial year) and amends the disclosure requirements for financial instruments. In general AASB 7 requires greater disclosure than that presently. Associated with the introduction of AASB 7 a number of accounting standards were amended to reference the new standard or remove the present disclosure requirements through 2005-10 Amendments to Australian Accounting Standards [AASB 132, AASB 101, AASB 114, AASB 117, AASB 133, AASB 139, AASB 1, AASB 4, AASB 1023 & AASB 1038]. These changes have no financial impact but will affect the disclosure presented in future financial reports.

Other

The following standards and interpretations have been issued but are not applicable to the operations of the ABS.

- AASB 1049 Financial Reporting of General Government Sectors by Governments
- UIG 10 Interim Financial Reporting and Impairment

1.5 Revenue

Revenues from Government

Amounts appropriated for Departmental outputs appropriations for the year (adjusted for any formal additions and reductions) are recognised as revenue, except for certain amounts that relate to activities that are reciprocal in nature, in which case revenue is recognised only when it has been earned.

In 2006-07, the ABS is undertaking an activity which is being funded on a reciprocal basis and thus recognises an appropriation receivable in the next period for additional outputs supplied in the current period (Note 5B).

Appropriations receivable are recognised at their nominal amounts.

Other Revenue

Sales of goods and services include revenue from the sale of publications, other products, and the provision of statistical services. Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when:

- The risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred to the buyer;
- The seller retains no managerial involvement nor effective control over the goods;
- The revenue and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

- It is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the entity.

Revenue from rendering of services is recognised by reference to the stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date. The revenue is recognised when:

- The amount of revenue, stage of completion and transaction costs incurred can be reliably measured; and
- The probable economic benefits with the transaction will flow to the entity.

The stage of completion of contracts at the reporting date is determined by reference to the proportion that costs incurred to date bear to the estimated total costs of the transaction.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30 day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any provision for bad and doubtful debts. Bad debts are written off during the year in which they are identified. Collectability of debts is reviewed at balance date. Provisions are made where collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

1.6 Gains

Resources Received Free of Charge

Resources received free of charge are recognised as gains when and only when a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would have been purchased if they had not been donated. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense.

Contributions of assets at no cost of acquisition or for nominal consideration are recognised as gains at their fair value when the asset qualifies for recognition, unless received from another government agency as a consequence of a restructuring of administrative arrangements.(refer to Note 1.8)

Sale of Assets

Gains from disposal of non-current assets are recognised when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

1.7 Unearned Revenue

Unearned revenue includes revenue from subscriptions to statistical publications, provision of statistical consultancies, and revenue from other agencies for statistical surveys. It is recognised on a proportional basis as the service is provided (Note 7B).

1.8 Transactions with the Government as Owner

Equity injections

Amounts appropriated which are designated as 'equity injections' for a year (less any formal reductions) are recognised directly in Contributed Equity in that year.

Restructuring of Administrative Arrangements

Net assets received from, or relinquished to another Australian Government Agency or Authority under a restructuring of administrative arrangements, are adjusted at their book value directly against contributed equity.

1.9 Employee Benefits

Liabilities for services rendered by employees are recognised at the reporting date to the extent that they have not been settled.

Liabilities for 'short term employee benefits' (as defined in AASB 119), and termination benefits due within twelve months of balance date are measured at their nominal amounts.

The nominal amount is calculated with regard to the rates expected to be paid on settlement of the liability.

All other employee benefit liabilities are measured as the present value of the estimated future cash outflows, to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date.

Leave

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. No provision has been made for sick leave, as all sick leave is non-vesting and the average sick leave taken in future years by employees of the ABS is estimated to be less than the annual entitlement for sick leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration, including the ABS's employer superannuation contribution rates to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

The liability for long service leave has been determined by reference to the work of an actuary as at 30 June 2006. The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

The employee entitlement provision includes superannuation on-costs payable to those employees who take their annual and long service leave prior to resignation or retirement. No superannuation is payable by the ABS when leave is cashed out on resignation or retirement.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Separation and Redundancy

Provision is made for separation and redundancy benefit payments where the ABS has formally identified positions as excess to requirements and a reliable estimate of the amount of the payments could be determined. The ABS offers severance packages to employees on a voluntary basis.

Superannuation

Staff of the ABS are members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS), the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS) or the PSS accumulation plan (PSSap).

The CSS and PSS are defined benefit schemes for the Commonwealth. The PSSap is a defined contribution scheme.

The liability for defined benefits is recognised in the financial statements of the Australian Government, and is settled by the Australian Government in due course.

The ABS makes employer contributions to the Australian Government, at rates determined by an actuary, to be sufficient to meet the cost to the Government of the superannuation entitlements of the ABS' employees.

From 1 July 2005, new employees are eligible to join the PSSap scheme.

In 2006-07 the ABS also made employer contributions to commercial accumulation superannuation funds as directed by its employees.

The liability for superannuation recognised as at 30 June 2007 represents outstanding contributions.

1.10 Provision for 'Makegood'

In accordance with AASB 137 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets, the ABS recognises a provision for 'makegood' based on an assessment of the probability that they will be required to meet these obligations in the future. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation at the reporting date.

Provisions are reviewed at each reporting date and adjusted to reflect the current best estimate.

1.11 Leases

A distinction is made between finance leases and operating leases. Finance leases effectively transfer from the lessor to the lessee, substantially all of the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of leased non-current assets. An operating lease is a

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

lease that is not a finance lease. In operating leases, the lessor effectively retains substantially all such risks and benefits.

Operating lease payments are expensed on a straight line basis, which is representative of the pattern of benefits derived from the leased assets.

The ABS has entered into a number of accommodation leases, which include lease incentives taking the form of 'free' leasehold improvements. Under UIG 115, all incentives in relation to operating leases are required to be classified as an integral part of the net consideration of the lease for the leased asset, irrespective of the incentive's nature, form or timing of payments.

Where a non-current asset is acquired by means of an incentive under an operating lease, the asset is capitalised at the fair value of the lease incentive at the inception of the contract, and a liability is recognised at the same time, for the same amount.

Where a non-current asset is acquired by means of a finance lease, the asset is capitalised at either the fair value of the lease property or, if lower, the present value of minimum lease payments at the inception of the contract, and a liability is recognised at the same time, for the same amount.

The discount rate used is the interest rate implicit in the lease. Leased assets are amortised over the period of the lease. Lease payments are allocated between the principal component and the interest expense.

1.12 Borrowing Costs

All borrowing costs are expensed as incurred.

1.13 Cash

Cash means notes and coins held and any deposits held at call with a bank or financial institution. Cash is recognised at its nominal amount.

1.14 Financial Risk Management

The ABS' activities expose it to normal commercial financial risk. As a result of the nature of the ABS' business and internal and Australian Government policies, dealing with the management of financial risk, the ABS' exposure to market, credit, liquidity and cash flow and fair value interest rate risk is considered to be low.

1.15 Derecognition of Financial Assets and Liabilities

Financial assets are derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial assets expire, or the asset is transferred to another entity. In the case of a transfer to another entity, it is necessary that the risks and rewards of ownership are also transferred.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the obligation under the contract is discharged, cancelled, or expires.

1.16 Accrued Revenue

The ABS accrues revenue at the time when the goods are provided and/or the services are performed.

1.17 Interest Bearing Loans and Borrowings

Government loans are carried at the balance yet to be repaid. Interest is expensed as it accrues.

1.18 Supplier and Other Payables

Supplier and other payables are recognised at their nominal amounts, being the amounts at which the liabilities will be settled. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

1.19 Acquisition of Assets

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition, except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at their fair value, plus transaction costs where appropriate.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and revenues at their fair value at the date of acquisition, unless acquired as a consequence of restructuring of administrative arrangements. In the latter case, assets are initially recognised as contributions by owners at the amounts at which they were recognised in the transferor agency's accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

1.20 Contingent Liabilities and Assets

Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are reported in the relevant schedules and notes. They may arise from uncertainty as to the existence of a liability or asset, or represent an existing liability or asset in respect of which settlement is not probable, or the amount cannot be reliably measured. Remote contingencies are part of this disclosure. Contingent assets are reported when settlement is probable, and contingent liabilities are recognised when settlement is greater than remote.

1.21 Impairment of Financial Assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at each balance date.

Financial Assets held at Amortised Cost

If there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred for loans and receivables or, maturity investments held at amortised cost, the amount of the loss is measured as the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The carrying amount is reduced by way of an allowance account. The loss is recognised in the Income Statement.

Financial Assets held at Cost

If there is objective evidence that an impairment loss has been incurred on an unquoted equity instrument that is not carried at fair value because it cannot be reliably measured, or a derivative asset that is linked to, and must be, settled by delivery of such an unquoted equity instrument, the amount of the impairment loss is the difference between the carrying amount of the asset and the present value of the estimated future cash flows discounted at the current market rate for similar assets.

Available for Sale Financial Assets

If there is objective evidence that an impairment loss on an available for sale financial asset has been incurred, the amount of the difference between its cost, less principal repayments and amortisation, and its current fair value, less any impairment loss previously recognised in expenses, is transferred from equity to the Income Statement.

1.22 Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment

Asset Recognition Threshold

Purchases of infrastructure, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the Balance Sheet, except for purchases costing less than \$2,000 (\$1,000 for IT assets and purchased software, and all Internally Generated Software assets), which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total).

The initial cost of an asset includes an estimate of the cost of dismantling and removing the item, and restoring the site on which it is located. This is particularly relevant to 'makegood' provisions in property leases taken up by ABS where an obligation exists to restore the property to its original condition. These costs are included in the value of ABS' leasehold improvements with a corresponding provision for the 'makegood' taken up.

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Revaluations

Basis

Fair values for each class of asset are determined as shown below:

<i>Asset Class</i>	<i>Fair Value Measured at:</i>
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	Market selling price

Following initial recognition at cost, infrastructure, plant and equipment are carried at fair value less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets do not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depends upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve, except to the extent that it reverses a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised through profit and loss. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly through profit and loss, except to the extent that they reverse a previous revaluation increment for that class.

Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the net amount restated to the revalued amount.

Depreciation

Depreciable infrastructure, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the ABS using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation. Leasehold improvements are depreciated on a straight-line basis over the lesser of the estimated useful life of the improvements, or the unexpired period of the lease.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation rates applying to each class of depreciable assets are based on the following useful lives:

	2007	2006
	—————*	—————*
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	5-10	5-10

* Within this class, Artwork and Curios has a useful life between 10-100 years.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

The aggregate amount of depreciation allocated for each class of asset during the reporting period is disclosed in Note 4C.

Impairment

All assets were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2007. Where indications of impairment exist, the asset's recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment adjustment made if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value, less costs to sell, and its value in use. Value in use for ABS assets is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost (where the ABS would replace the asset if it was deprived of it) as future economic benefit is not primarily dependent on the asset's ability to generate future cash flows.

No indicators of impairment were found for infrastructure, plant and equipment assets at fair value.

1.23 Intangibles

The ABS' intangibles comprise internally developed software and purchased software.

Software is amortised on a straight line basis.

Internally Generated Software

In its role as Australia's national statistical agency, the ABS builds and maintains a significant set of internally generated software (IGSW) assets. These assets are added to over time, in line with the increasing range of statistical information sought by government, business and the general community, and the increasing use of technology, particularly in relation to collection, analysis and dissemination activities.

All software developed in-house since 1 July 1994 has been capitalised (Note 6C). The costing methodology capitalises direct salary and on costs for programmers and non-programmers, applicable information technology costs and some direct external costs. General administration, and overhead costs relating to software development have not been capitalised. The data capture systems in place to collect data are in line with the requirements of the FMO's. Non-programmer staff costs relating to IGSW are capitalised at 49.58% of captured programmer cost. This estimate is based upon a sample of IGSW projects that was last undertaken in 2003. (Refer Note 1.3)

In accordance with the requirements of AASB 138 Intangible Assets, IGSW is stated at cost. All IGSW assets were assessed for indications of impairment as at 30 June 2007 (refer Note 1.22 and Note 4E).

Purchased Software

Purchased software assets are stated at cost where the asset costs more than \$1,000. Assets below this threshold are expensed at the time of purchase. The cost of purchased software includes the purchase price and any directly attributable costs.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Amortisation

The ABS has long term commitments to survey and data collection programs. These are supported by software packages that are required to be maintained for the same time period as the data collection and analysis programs, to ensure consistency in approach and of data treatment.

The estimated useful lives of the major asset classes are as follows:

	2007 <u>Life in Years</u>	2006 <u>Life in Years</u>
Computer software – proprietary	5	5
Computer software – internally generated	2 to 28	2 to 28

The aggregate amount of amortisation allocated for each class of asset during the reporting period is disclosed in Note 4C.

1.24 Historical Statistical Data

Statistical data accumulated over many years is stored for reference purposes. While having no value for accounting purposes, historical time series data plays an important part in the operations of the ABS as Australia's official statistical provider. The cost of storing and maintaining this data is treated as an operating expense.

1.25 Capital Work in Progress

Capital work in progress represents two main asset types: software assets under development, and office refurbishments. Work in progress is disclosed in the infrastructure, plant and equipment, and intangibles balances.

Software assets are not depreciated until the year in which the development phase is completed and the asset is operational. Where use of the asset commences after substantial completion of the development phase, but some improvements or enhancements to the system continue to be made, the date of substantial completion is treated as the date of completion and depreciation commences from that date.

1.26 Inventories

Inventories comprise items held for sale that are considered significant and are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value (Note 6D). As part of the rationalisation of product delivery services, physical inventory items held were reduced significantly in previous financial years. Most products are now available electronically or printed on request.

Consumable stores and supplies are considered to be immaterial and have been expensed at the time of purchase.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

1.27 Other Non-Financial Assets

Other non-financial assets include prepayments for maintenance contracts, office rent, rights to childcare places at Bluebell Childcare Centre, security, and subscriptions (refer Note 6E).

1.28 Insurance

The ABS is insured for risks through the Government's insurable risk managed fund called 'Comcover'. Workers compensation is insured through the Government's Comcare Australia.

1.29 Taxation

The ABS is exempt from all forms of taxation, except Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except:

- where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and
- for receivables and payables.

Note 2: Events after the Balance Sheet date

There have been no events occurring subsequent to balance date that would affect the Australian Bureau of Statistics Financial Statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2007.

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 3: Income		
<u>Revenues</u>		
<u>Note 3A: Revenues from Government</u>		
Appropriations for outputs	414,431	318,622
<i>Total revenues from government</i>	<u>414,431</u>	<u>318,622</u>
 <u>Note 3B: Goods and Services</u>		
Goods	1,784	2,084
Services	21,184	17,550
<i>Total sales of goods and services</i>	<u>22,968</u>	<u>19,634</u>
 Provision of goods to:		
Related entities	1,071	1,746
External entities	713	338
<i>Total sales of goods</i>	<u>1,784</u>	<u>2,084</u>
 Rendering of services to:		
Related entities	12,721	14,701
External entities	8,463	2,849
<i>Total rendering of services</i>	<u>21,184</u>	<u>17,550</u>

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
<u>Gains</u>		
<u>Note 3C: Net Gains/(Losses) from Sale of Assets</u>		
Infrastructure, plant and equipment:		
Proceeds from disposal	665	79
Net book value of assets disposed	(524)	(476)
Selling expense	(11)	-
<i>Net gain/(loss) from disposal of infrastructure, plant and equipment</i>	130	(397)
Intangible Assets		
Proceeds from disposal	-	-
Net book value of assets disposed	-	(16)
<i>Net gain/(loss) from disposal of intangible assets</i>	-	(16)
Total proceeds from disposals	665	79
Total value of assets disposed	(535)	(492)
<i>Total net gain/(loss) from disposal of assets</i>	130	(413)
<u>Note 3D: Other gains</u>		
Resources received free of charge	110	109
Other Gains	24	5
	134	114

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
	<u>\$'000</u>	<u>\$'000</u>
Note 4: Operating Expenses		
<u>Note 4A: Employee expenses</u>		
Wages and salaries	209,304	176,571
Superannuation	34,456	30,225
Leave and other entitlements	5,678	6,003
Interviewers wages and superannuation	11,463	10,973
Census field staff wages and superannuation	50,299	3,453
Separation and redundancies	274	(328)
Other employee expenses	<u>2,910</u>	<u>1,794</u>
Total employee benefits	314,384	228,691
Less amounts capitalised ¹	<u>(19,703)</u>	<u>(18,806)</u>
Total employee expenses	<u>294,681</u>	<u>209,885</u>
<u>Note 4B: Suppliers</u>		
Provision of goods - related entities	3,301	1,629
Provision of goods - external entities	14,066	23,740
Rendering of services - related entities	2,855	3,383
Rendering of services - external entities	54,968	38,640
Operating lease rentals ²	28,408	28,499
Workers compensation premiums	<u>3,915</u>	<u>3,244</u>
Total supplier expenses	<u>107,513</u>	<u>99,135</u>

1. Amounts capitalised relate to both internally generated software and purchased software (\$19,507,000 for IGSW and \$196,000 for purchased software).

2. These comprise minimum lease payments only.

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
<u>Note 4C: Depreciation and Amortisation</u>		
<u>Depreciation</u>		
Infrastructure, plant and equipment	16,094	12,907
Total depreciation	16,094	12,907
<u>Amortisation</u>		
Intangibles – Computer Software	16,457	15,457
Leasehold Improvements	892	349
Total amortisation	17,349	15,806
Total depreciation and amortisation	33,443	28,713

The aggregate amounts of depreciation or amortisation expensed during the reporting period for each subclass of depreciable assets are as follows:

Artwork and Curios	18	32
Furniture	1,507	1,400
Office Equipment	216	135
Leasehold Improvements (including incentives)	7,066	3,994
Plant and Equipment	541	446
IT Hardware	7,638	7,249
Intangibles	16,457	15,457
Total depreciation and amortisation	33,443	28,713

No depreciation or amortisation was allocated to the carrying amounts of other assets.

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
<u>Note 4D: Finance Costs</u>		
Loan from Government	435	514
Unwinding of discount	-	23
<i>Total finance costs expense</i>	<u>435</u>	<u>537</u>
 <u>Note 4E: Write down and impairment of assets</u>		
Bad debts written off	16	1
Internally developed software-impairment	<u>1,288</u>	<u>66</u>
<i>Total write-down and impairment of assets</i>	<u>1,304</u>	<u>67</u>

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 5: Financial Assets		
<u>Note 5A: Cash and cash equivalents</u>		
Special Account ¹	107	122
Departmental (other than special accounts)	6,328	8,694
<i>Total cash and cash equivalents</i>	6,435	8,816
 <u>Note 5B: Trade and other receivables</u>		
Goods and services	2,433	991
GST receivable from the Australian Taxation Office	538	1,028
Sundry receivables	388	362
Appropriations receivable ²		
for existing outputs	3,666	5,277
for additional outputs	1,484	-
<i>Total receivables (net)</i>	8,509	7,658
Receivables is represented by:		
Current	8,509	7,658
<i>Total receivables (net)</i>	8,509	7,658

All trade receivables are current assets. Credit terms are net 30 days (2005-06: 30 days).

¹ Refer also Note 18

² In 2006-07 the ABS accrued \$1,484,000 for Standard Business Reporting, a 2006-07 budget measure. The remaining balance relates to the ABS' return of \$3,666,000 to the Official Public Account which was surplus to working cash requirements. The amount comprised \$666,000 (2006-07) and \$3,000,000 (2004-05). These amounts can be redrawn at any time.

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
Receivables (gross) are aged as follows:		
Current	7,316	7,594
Overdue by:		
Less than 30 days	910	7
30 to 60 days	135	15
61 to 90 days	50	18
More than 90 days	98	24
Total Overdue	1,193	64
Total receivables (gross)	8,509	7,658

Note 6: Non-Financial Assets

Note 6A: Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment

Infrastructure, plant and equipment

- work in progress	990	423
- fair value	76,259	34,752
- at cost	-	29,427
- accumulated depreciation	(25,937)	(10,534)
Total Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment (non-current)	51,312	54,068

All revaluations are independent and are conducted in accordance with the revaluation policy stated at Note 1.22. Revaluations are conducted by an independent valuer.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 6B: Analysis of Property, Plant and Equipment

TABLE A – Reconciliation of the Opening and Closing Balances of Property, Plant and Equipment

Item	Infrastructure, Plant and Equipment	Total
	\$'000	\$'000
As at 1 July 2006		
Gross book value	64,602	64,602
Accumulated depreciation/amortization	(10,534)	(10,534)
Opening Net book value	54,068	54,068
Additions:		
by purchase	14,762	14,762
From acquisition of operations	-	-
Net revaluation increment/(decrement)		
Depreciation/amortisation expense	(16,986)	(16,986)
Other Adjustments		
Reclassifications	(8)	(8)
Recoverable Amount write-downs	-	-
Write-offs	-	-
Disposals:		
From disposal of operations		
Other disposals	(524)	(524)
As at 30 June 2007		
Gross book value	77,249	77,249
Accumulated depreciation/amortization	(25,937)	(25,937)
Closing Net book value	51,312	51,312

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
<u>Note 6C: Intangible Assets</u>		
Computer software:		
Computer software in progress – (non-current)	-	197
Internally developed – in progress (non-current)	8,759	5,103
ANZSCO and ANZSIC capitalisation – in progress (non-current)	-	1,560
Impairment write-down	(124)	-
	8,635	6,860
Internally developed – in use (non-current)	161,822	168,047
Purchased software	17,136	18,675
Accumulated amortisation	(91,049)	(101,531)
Impairment write-down (refer Note 4E)	(1,164)	(66)
	86,745	85,125
<i>Total intangibles (non-current)</i>	95,380	91,985

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

TABLE A – reconciliation of opening and closing balances of intangibles			
Item	Computer software internally developed	Computer software purchased	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
As at 1 July 2006			
Gross book value	174,841	18,675	193,516
Accumulated amortisation	(87,630)	(13,901)	(101,531)
Opening Net book value	87,211	4,774	91,985
Additions			
Purchase/Internally developed	19,507	1,625	21,132
Reclassifications	-	8	8
Depreciation/amortisation	(14,699)	(1,758)	(16,457)
Writedown of assets			
Impairments recognised in the operating result	(1,288)	-	(1,288)
Other movements			
Disposals:			
other disposals	-	-	-
Net book value as at 30 June 2007	90,731	4,649	95,380
Gross Book Value	169,293	17,136	186,429
Accumulated amortisation	(78,562)	(12,487)	(91,049)
Closing Net Book Value	90,731	4,649	95,380

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
<u>Note 6D: Inventories</u>		
Finished goods (cost)	<u>26</u>	<u>56</u>
Inventories held for sale		
<i>Total inventories</i>	<u>26</u>	<u>56</u>

All departmental inventories are current assets.

Note 6E: Other Non-Financial Assets

Prepayments comprising of:

Information technology	1,302	1,172
Software licenses	1,101	1,679
Office rent	4,737	4,966
Subscriptions	53	3
Other	<u>38</u>	<u>85</u>
<i>Total prepayments</i>	<u>7,231</u>	<u>7,905</u>

Other non-financial assets is represented by:

Current	4,469	4,747
Non-Current	<u>2,762</u>	<u>3,158</u>
<i>Total prepayments</i>	<u>7,231</u>	<u>7,905</u>

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
Note 7: Payables		
<u>Note 7A: Suppliers</u>		
Trade creditors	5,513	10,809
Sundry creditors	363	79
Total Supplier Payables	<u>5,876</u>	<u>10,888</u>

All supplier payables are current liabilities.
Settlement is usually made net 30 days.

Note 7B: Unearned revenue

Unearned revenue	1,954	5,756
Total unearned revenue	<u>1,954</u>	<u>5,756</u>

All unearned revenue is a current liability.

Note 8: Interest Bearing Liabilities

Note 8: Loans

Loans from Government	6,245	7,585
Maturity schedule for loans: Payable:		
Within one year	1,424	1,340
In one to five years	4,821	6,245
In more than five years	-	-
Total loan liability	<u>6,245</u>	<u>7,585</u>

The loan was issued in 2001-02 and is repayable in quarterly instalments beginning in 2001-02 and ending in 2010-11. The interest rate implicit in the loan is 6.12%.

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 9: Lease Incentives		
Lease incentives	<u>26,729</u>	<u>21,011</u>
Lease incentives are represented by:		
Current	1,598	1,527
Non-Current	<u>25,131</u>	<u>19,484</u>
Total lease incentives	<u>26,729</u>	<u>21,011</u>

Note 10: Provisions

Note 10A: Employee Provisions

Salaries and wages	1,579	1,726
Leave	65,801	64,203
Superannuation	265	255
Separations and redundancies	<u>75</u>	<u>75</u>
Total employee provisions	<u>67,720</u>	<u>66,259</u>
Current	59,341	58,253
Non-current	<u>8,379</u>	<u>8,006</u>
Total employee provisions	<u>67,720</u>	<u>66,259</u>

The classification of current includes amounts for which there is not an unconditional right of deferral of one year, hence in the case of employee provisions the above classification does not equal the amount expected to be settled within one year of reporting date. Employee provisions expected to be settled in one year \$22,278,000 (2005-06:\$20,536,000), in excess of one year \$45,442,000 (2005-06: \$45,723,000).

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Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
<u>Note 10B: Other Provisions</u>		
Provision for 'Makegood'	1,000	1,475
<i>Total other provisions</i>	1,000	1,475
Current	1,000	475
Non-current	-	1,000
<i>Total other provisions</i>	1,000	1,475

Movement of Provision for Make good

Carrying amount at beginning of period	1,475	451
Additional provisions made	-	1,000
Amounts reversed	(450)	-
Unwinding of Discount	(25)	24
Amount owing at end of period	1,000	1,475

The ABS currently has four agreements for the leasing of premises which have provisions requiring the ABS to restore the premises to their original condition at the conclusion of the lease.

Only one of these agreements meet the probability test of AASB 137. The ABS has made a provision to reflect the present value of these obligations. The remaining three agreements are disclosed as contingent liabilities in the Schedule of Contingencies.

The present value of the qualifying makegood liability has been obtained through valuation as at 30 June 2007.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 11: Cash Flow Reconciliation		
Reconciliation of cash per Income Statement to Statement of Cash Flows		
Cash at year end per Statement of Cash Flows	6,435	8,816
Statement of Financial Position items comprising above cash: 'Financial Asset – Cash'	6,435	8,816
Reconciliation of operating result to net cash from operating activities:		
Operating result	601	23
Depreciation /amortisation	33,443	28,713
Net write down of non-financial assets	1,288	66
Assets first recognised	-	(80)
(Gain)/Loss on disposal of assets	(130)	413
(Increase) / decrease in net receivables	529	103
(Increase) / decrease in inventories	30	(35)
(Increase) / decrease in prepayments	674	(295)
Increase / (decrease) in employee provisions	1,461	(1,553)
Increase / (decrease) in supplier payables	(5,013)	1,997
(Increase) / decrease in accrued revenues	(288)	1,202
Increase / (decrease) in unearned revenue	(3,802)	3,239
Increase / (decrease) in other liabilities	5,843	3,661
Net cash from / (used by) operating activities	34,636	37,454

Note 12: Contingent Liabilities and Assets

Quantifiable Contingencies

The Schedule of Contingencies reports a contingent liability as at 30 June 2007 in respect of a number of leases with make good clauses in them of \$4,714,000 (2005-06:\$3,987,000). New leases are being negotiated without a make good provision.

Unquantifiable and Remote Contingencies

At 30 June 2007, the ABS was subject to a legal claim arising from its previous employment of the claimant over 16 years ago. The ABS has denied liability and is defending the claim (2005-06: Nil).

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 13: Executive Remuneration	2007	2006
The number of senior executives who received or were due to receive total remuneration of \$130,000 or more:		
\$130 000 to \$144 999	2	2
\$145 000 to \$159 999	4	3
\$160 000 to \$174 999	10	14
\$175 000 to \$189 999	8	9
\$190 000 to \$204 999	5	2
\$205 000 to \$219 999	2	2
\$220 000 to \$234 999	2	2
\$235 000 to \$249 999	2	1
\$250 000 to \$264 999	1	2
\$265 000 to \$279 999	-	-
\$280 000 to \$294 999	-	-
\$295 000 to \$309 999	2	-
\$310 000 to \$324 999	-	-
\$325,000 to \$354 999	-	-
\$355,000 to \$369 999	-	1
Total	<u>38</u>	<u>38</u>

The aggregate amount of total remuneration of executives shown above. \$7,254,704 \$7,137,011

The aggregate amount of separation and redundancy/termination benefit payments during the year to executives shown above. \$224,022 \$-

Total remuneration includes the actual salary earned by SES officers, actual employer superannuation contributions and the actual cost of the non-salary component of the SES packages (e.g. provision of a car and accrued leave entitlements).

There was a change in the Australian Statistician in 2006-07 due to retirement.

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
Note 14: Remuneration of Auditors		

Financial statement audit services are provided free of charge to the ABS.

The fair value of the services provided was:	<u>\$110,000</u>	<u>\$109,223</u>
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No other services were provided by the Auditor-General.

	2007	2006
Note 15: Staff Levels		

Staff levels ¹ at 30 June were:	3,166	3,378
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¹Staff employed at the ABS under the *Public Service Act 1999*. This includes operative and paid inoperative staff.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 16: Financial Instruments

Note 16A: Interest Rate Risk

Financial Instrument	Notes	Floating Interest Rate		Fixed Interest Rate				Non-Interest Bearing		Total		Weighted Average Effective Interest Rate	
		Rate		Maturing In		> 5 Years		Bearing		Total		Rate	
		2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	1 to 5 Years 2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 %
Financial Assets													
Cash at Bank	5A	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,435	8,816	6,435	8,816	-	-
Receivables for goods and services (gross)	5B	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,433	991	2,433	991	n/a	n/a
Other receivables	5B	-	-	-	-	-	-	388	362	388	362	n/a	n/a
Accrued revenue		-	-	-	-	-	-	497	209	497	209	n/a	n/a
Total		-	-	-	-	-	-	9,753	10,378	9,753	10,378		
Total Assets										169,390	170,697		
Financial Liabilities													
Government loans	8	-	-	1,424	1,340	4,821	6,245	-	-	6,245	7,585	6.1	6.1
Trade creditors	7A	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,513	10,809	5,513	10,809	n/a	n/a
Sundry creditors	7A	-	-	-	-	-	-	363	79	363	79	n/a	n/a
Total		-	-	1,424	1,340	4,821	6,245	5,876	10,888	12,121	18,473		
Total Liabilities										109,524	112,974		

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 16B: Fair Values of Financial Assets and Liabilities

	Notes	2007		2006	
		Total Carrying Amount \$'000	Aggregate Net Fair Value \$'000	Total Carrying Amount \$'000	Aggregate Net Fair Value \$'000
Departmental Financial Assets					
Cash at bank	5A	6,435	6,435	8,816	8,816
Receivables for goods and services (net)	5B	2,433	2,433	991	991
Other receivables	5B	388	388	362	362
Accrued revenue		497	497	209	209
Total Financial Assets		9,753	9,753	10,378	10,378
Financial Liabilities (Recognised)					
Government loans	8	6,245	6,245	7,585	7,585
Trade creditors	7A	5,513	5,513	10,809	10,809
Sundry creditors	7A	363	363	79	79
Total Financial Liabilities (Recognised)		12,121	12,121	18,473	18,473

The net fair values of cash and non-interest-bearing monetary financial assets approximate their carrying amounts.

The net fair values of the finance lease, lease incentives and surplus lease space are based on discounted cash flows using current interest rates for liabilities with similar risk profiles.

The net fair values for trade creditors are approximated by their carrying amounts.

Note 16C: Credit Risk Exposures

The ABS's maximum exposures to credit risk at reporting date in relation to each class of recognised financial assets is the carrying amount of those assets as indicated in the Balance Sheet.

The ABS has no significant exposures to any concentrations of credit risk.

All figures for credit risk referred to do not take into account the value of any collateral or other security.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 17: Appropriations

Note 17A: Acquittal of Authority to Draw Cash from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) for Ordinary Annual Services Appropriations

Particulars	Departmental Outputs		Total	
	2007	2006	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Balance carried from previous period	15,121	15,666	15,121	15,666
Appropriation Act (No.1)	413,823	318,622	413,823	318,622
Accrued Appropriation, Appropriation Act (No.2) 2007-08	608	-	608	-
Departmental Adjustments by the Finance Minister (Appropriation Acts)	-	-	-	-
Advance to the Finance Minister	-	-	-	-
Comcover receipts (Appropriation Act s13)	-	-	-	-
FMA Act:				
Refunds credited (FMA s 30) *	1,919	1,360	1,919	1,360
Appropriations to take account of recoverable GST (FMA s30A)	12,734	10,789	12,734	10,789
Annotations to 'net appropriations' (FMA s31)	19,034	31,139	19,034	31,139
Adjustment of appropriations on change of entity function (FMA s32)				
Total appropriations available for payments	463,239	377,576	463,239	377,576
Cash payments made during the year (GST inclusive)	(452,312)	(362,455)	(452,312)	(362,455)
<i>Appropriations credited to Special Accounts (excluding GST)</i>	-	-	-	-
Balance of Authority to Draw Cash from the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Ordinary Annual Services Appropriations	10,927	15,121	10,927	15,121
Represented by:				
Cash	6,781	8,816	6,781	8,816
Departmental appropriations receivable	3,608	5,277	3,608	5,277
Receivables – GST receivable from ATO	538	1,028	538	1,028
Total	10,927	15,121	10,927	15,121

*The majority of Section 30 revenue relates to COMCARE receipts. In 2005-06, COMCARE receipts were appropriated under Section 20 of the financial Management and Accountability Act 1997, for comparison purpose refer to note 18: Special Account.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 17B: Acquittal of Authority to Draw Cash from the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) for other than Ordinary Annual Services

Particulars	Non-operating		Total
	Equity		
	2007	2006	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Balance carried from previous year	-	-	-
Appropriation Act (No.2)	666	994	666
Accrued appropriation-Appropriation Act (No.2) 2007-08	876	-	876
Adjustments determined by the Finance Minister	-	-	-
Advance to the Finance Minister	-	-	-
Refunds credited (FMA s30A)	-	-	-
GST credits (FMA s30A)	-	99	99
Transfer to/from other agencies (FMA s32)	-	-	-
Administered appropriation lapsed or reduced	-	-	-
Total appropriations available for payments	1,542	1,093	1,542
Cash Payments made during the year (GST inclusive)	-	(1,093)	(1,093)
Appropriations credited to special Accounts	-	-	-
Balance of Authority to Draw Cash from the CRF for Other Than Ordinary annual Services Appropriations	1,542	-	1,542
Represented by:			
Cash at bank and on hand	-	-	-
Appropriations receivable	1,542	-	1,542
Total	1,542	-	1,542

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 18: Special Accounts

Note 18A: Trust Fund and Other Trust Moneys

Trust Fund and Other Trust Moneys	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
Legal Authority: <i>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 Section 20.</i>		
This account is non-interest bearing.		
<i>This account has two purposes:</i>		
<i>Purpose 1:</i> For the receipt of moneys temporarily held on trust or otherwise for the benefit of a person other than the Commonwealth. Any money held is thus special public money under section 16 of the <i>FMA Act 1997</i> .		
<i>Purpose 2*:</i> This account holds moneys advanced to the Australian Bureau of Statistics by COMCARE for the purpose of distributing compensation payments made in accordance with the <i>Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1998</i> . Where ABS makes payments against accrued sick leave entitlements pending determination of an employee's claim, permission is obtained in writing from each individual to allow ABS to recover the payments from the moneys in the account.		
<i>Purpose 1:</i>		
Balance carried from previous period	92	99
Receipts during the year from customers	15	5
Available for payments	107	104
Payments made	-	12
Balance carried to the next period	107	92
<i>Purpose 2 *</i>		
Balance carried from previous period	-	30
Receipts during the year	-	363
Available for payments	-	393
Payments made	-	363
Balance carried to the next period	-	30
Represented by:		
<i>Cash</i>	107	122

* The COMCARE receipts are appropriated under Section 30 of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, for comparison purpose refer to note 17: Appropriation.

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 18B: Services for Other Governments and Non-Agency Bodies

Services for Other Governments and Non-Agency Bodies	2007	2006
	\$'000	\$'000
Legal Authority: <i>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997 Section 20.</i>		
<i>Purpose:</i> For expenditure in connection with services performed on behalf of other Governments and bodies that are not FMA agencies.		
The ABS does not incur any expenditure in connection with services performed on behalf of other Governments and bodies that are not FMA agencies.		
Balance carried forward from previous year	-	-
Receipts during the year	-	-
Available for payments	-	-
Payments made	-	-
<i>Balance carried forward to next year</i>	-	-
<i>Total</i>	-	-
Represented by:		
<i>Cash</i>	-	-

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
Note 19: Compensation and Debt Relief		
No 'Act of Grace' payments were made during the reporting period, and there are no amounts owing as at year end.	<u>Nil</u>	<u>Nil</u>
No waivers of amounts owing to the Commonwealth were made pursuant to subsection 34(1) of <i>(the Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997)</i> .	<u>Nil</u>	<u>Nil</u>
No payments were made under the 'Defective Administration Scheme' during the reporting period.	<u>Nil</u>	<u>Nil</u>
No payments were made under s73 of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> during the reporting period.	<u>Nil</u>	<u>Nil</u>

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 20: Reporting of Outcomes

Note 20A: Net Cost of Outcome Delivery

	Outcome 1		Total
	2007	2006	
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental	437,595	338,930	437,595
Total expenses	437,595	338,930	437,595
<i>Costs recovered from provision of goods and services to the non-government sector</i>			
Departmental	9,176	3,187	9,176
Total costs recovered	9,176	3,187	9,176
<i>Other external revenues</i>			
Net Gains	154	5	154
Other	533	583	533
Goods and Services Revenue from Related Entities	13,792	16,447	13,792
Total Departmental	14,479	17,035	14,479
Total other external revenues	14,479	17,035	14,479
Net cost/(contribution) of outcome	413,940	318,708	413,940

Outcome 1 is described in Note 1.1.

Net costs shown include intra-government costs that are eliminated in calculating the actual Budget outcome.

Notes to and forming part of the Financial Statements

Note 20B: Major Classes of Departmental Revenues and Expenses by Output Groups and Outputs

Outcome 1	Output Group 1.1				Outcome 1 Total	
	Output Group 1.1.1		Output Group 1.1.2		2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000
	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000	2007 \$'000	2006 \$'000		
Departmental expenses						
Employees	96,221	82,770	198,460	127,115	294,681	209,885
Suppliers	35,106	39,144	72,407	59,991	107,513	99,135
Depreciation and amortisation	10,920	11,323	22,523	17,390	33,443	28,713
Other expenses	639	472	1,319	725	1,958	1,197
Total departmental expenses	142,886	133,709	294,709	205,221	437,595	338,930
Funded by:						
Revenues from government	135,988	127,764	278,443	190,858	414,431	318,622
Sale of goods and services	7,070	5,738	15,898	13,896	22,968	19,634
Other non-taxation income	164	170	369	413	533	583
Total departmental revenues	143,222	133,672	294,710	205,167	437,932	338,839

Output Group 1.1 - National Statistical Service
 Output Group 1.1.1 - Economic Statistics
 Output Group 1.1.2 - Population and Social Statistics

Section VIII

APPENDIXES



APPENDIX 1

Contact details

For inquiries about the *ABS Annual Report 2006–07*, please contact:

Director, Secretariat, Australian Bureau of Statistics

Locked Bag 10

Belconnen ACT 2616

Telephone: 02 6252 7809

Email: julie.evans@abs.gov.au

Access to ABS statistics and documents (including the annual report), is available through the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au).

For any queries about statistical information, contact the National Information and Referral Service from anywhere in Australia between 8.30 am and 5 pm (EST) on:

1300 135 070 (Australian residents)

+61 2 9268 4909 (International callers)

Alternatively, you can email your query to client.services@abs.gov.au

The ABS has offices in every state and territory.

Office	Street address	Postal address
Central office, Canberra	ABS House 45 Benjamin Way Belconnen ACT 2617	Locked Bag 10 Belconnen ACT 2616
New South Wales	5th Floor St Andrews House Sydney Square Sydney NSW 2000	GPO Box 796 Sydney NSW 2001
Victoria	5th Floor Commercial Union Tower 485 LaTrobe Street Melbourne Vic 3000	GPO Box 2796Y Melbourne Vic 3001
Queensland	Level 3 639 Wickham St Fortitude Valley Qld 4006	GPO Box 9817 Brisbane Qld 4001
South Australia	Level 9 ANZ House 11 Waymouth St Adelaide SA 5000	GPO Box 2272 Adelaide SA 5001

Office	Street address	Postal address
Western Australia	Level 15 Exchange Plaza Sherwood Court Perth WA 6001	GPO Box K881 Perth WA 6842
Tasmania	200 Collins Street Hobart Tas 7000	GPO Box 66A Hobart Tas 7001
Northern Territory	7th Floor AANT House 81 Smith Street Darwin NT 0800	GPO BOX 3796 Darwin NT 0801
ACT	Level 5 33–35 Ainslie Avenue Canberra City ACT 2601	Locked Bag 10 Belconnen ACT 2616

APPENDIX 2

User groups advising the ABS

Following are the user groups advising the ABS on its forward work program:

National groups

- ◆ Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey Reference Group
- ◆ Advisory Committee on Australian and International Disability Data
- ◆ Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics
- ◆ Agriculture Statistics User Forum
- ◆ Australia–New Zealand Population Workshop
- ◆ Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations Reference Group
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Australian Standing Committee of Tourism
- ◆ Biotechnology Statistics User Group
- ◆ Business Longitudinal Database External Advisory Group
- ◆ Centre of Environment and Energy Statistics Advisory Board
 - Energy Statistics Discussion Group
 - Land and Natural Resource Management Statistics User Group
 - Water Statistics User Group
- ◆ Childcare and Early Years Learning Survey Reference Group
- ◆ Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ Cultural Ministers’ Council Statistics Working Group
- ◆ Demography Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ Economic Statistics User Group
- ◆ Education and Training Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ Family Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ General Social Survey Reference Group
- ◆ Health Data Standards Committee

- ◆ Health Statistical Information Committee
- ◆ Health Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ Household Income and Expenditure Statistics User Advisory Group
- ◆ Information and Communication Technology Statistics Reference Group
- ◆ Innovation Survey Technical Reference Group
- ◆ Input–Output Statistics User Group
- ◆ International Accounts Reference Group
- ◆ International Trade in Services User Group
- ◆ Labour Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ Mesh block Steering Committee
- ◆ Methodology Advisory Group
- ◆ Migrant Statistics Reference Group
- ◆ Mining User Advisory Group
- ◆ National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data
- ◆ National Ageing Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ National Committee for Housing Information
- ◆ National Community Services Information Management Group
- ◆ National Corrective Services Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ National Crime Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ National Criminal Courts Statistics Advisory Group
- ◆ National Data Network Interim Governing Board
- ◆ National Health Information Group Statistical Information Committee
- ◆ National Health Information Management Principal Committee
- ◆ Passenger Card Data User Group
- ◆ Passenger Card Steering Group
- ◆ Personal Safety Survey Advisory Group
- ◆ Population Estimates Technical Workshop
- ◆ Population Health Information Development Group
- ◆ Private Hospital Statistics User Group
- ◆ Productivity Measurement Reference Group
- ◆ Research and Development Statistics User Forum
- ◆ Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group

- ◆ 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
- ◆ Steering Group for the Crime and Justice Information Development Plan
- ◆ Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers Advisory Group
- ◆ Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing Reference Group
- ◆ Tourism Research Committee
- ◆ Transport Statistics User Group
- ◆ Website Advisory Group

State government groups

- ◆ Economic and Social Statistics Consultative Groups (Western Australia)
- ◆ Information Development Steering Committee (Australian Capital Territory)
- ◆ Information Technical Reference Group (Victoria)
- ◆ Northern Territory Government Census Steering Committee
- ◆ Northern Territory Government Statistical Priorities Advisory Committee
- ◆ Northern Territory Statistical Liaison Committee
- ◆ Population Intelligence Working Group (Northern Territory)
- ◆ Queensland State Statistical Consultative Committee
- ◆ Social Statistics Consultative Groups (Western Australia)
- ◆ State Statistical Forum (all states and territories)
- ◆ State Statistical Priorities Committee (South Australia)
- ◆ Statistical Coordination and User Forum (New South Wales)
- ◆ Statistical Policy Committee (Tasmania)
- ◆ Statistical Policy Committee (Western Australia)
- ◆ Tasmanian Statistical Advisory Committee
- ◆ Victorian Statistical Advisory Forum

APPENDIX 3

Consultancy services

Policy on selection and engagement of consultants

ABS policy on the selection and engagement of consultants is consistent with the ABS' Chief Executive Instructions, and the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines. The ABS selects and engages consultants in a way that provides value for money.

Total consultancies let in 2006–07

During 2006–07, twelve new consultants were engaged to carry out projects or provide professional and technical advice that could not be provided by ABS staff. The total expenditure of the twelve new consultancies during 2006–07 was \$481 670. Eleven consultancies, let in previous years, continued in 2006–07. Therefore the total expenditure for 2006–07 was \$312 948.

Appendix table 3.1 shows the total expenditure on all consultancies, covering both payments made on new contracts let in 2006–07, and payments made on contracts let in previous years. The larger consultancy contracts (those valued at \$10 000 or more) are detailed in Appendix table 3.2, along with notes on the procurement method used.

Appendix table 3.1: Consultancy services contracts entered into by the ABS

	Consultancies (number)	Expenditure (\$) including GST
2003–04	63	958 269
2004–05	24	825 069
2005–06	37	941 861
2006–07	23	794 618

Appendix table 3.2: Consultancy services contracts let in 2006–07, valued at \$10 000 or more

Vendor name	Amount (\$) including GST	Type of tender and justification
InfoHRM Pty Ltd	81 837	Request for quotation(a)(d)
Mercer Human Resource Consulting Pty Ltd	20 689	Request for quotation(d)
Nirmana Pty Ltd	34 628	Direct negotiation(c)
Open Spatial Australia Pty Ltd	22 497	Request for quotation(a)
Leon Pietsch	44 440	Direct negotiation(a)(c)
Price Waterhouse Coopers	87 617	Public tender(a)(b)
Red Pony Pty Ltd	43 572	Direct negotiation(a)
University of Wollongong	19 360	Direct negotiation(d)

Justification for recourse to consultancy arrangements

- (a) Need for specialised skills
- (b) Need for access to the latest technology and experience in its application
- (c) Lack of available in-house resources
- (d) Need for an independent study

APPENDIX 4

Advertising and market research

The ABS paid \$5 233 752 for advertising and market research in 2006–07, comprising \$4 980 474 for advertising and \$253 278 for market research. Expenditure on marketing and public relations consultancies was \$269 892 and \$33 812 for direct mail costs. ABS expenditure on individual advertising or market research exceeding \$1500 is detailed in Appendix table 4.1.

Expenditure on advertising and market research is considerably higher for 2006–07 (\$5 233 752), when compared to 2005–06 (\$1 912 431). The increase in expenditure can be primarily attributed to the marketing of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, which ensured a high level of awareness and support for the census.

Appendix table 4.1: Advertising, market research and public relations consultancies, and direct mail costs paid by, or on behalf of, the ABS, to the value of \$1500 or more, 2006–07

Name of organisation paid	\$ including GST
Advertising	
Euro RSCG Pty Ltd	163 929
HMA Blaze	767 574
Universal McCann	4 048 971
Market research	
Market Attitude Research Survey	100 346
Wallis Consulting Group	152 932
Marketing and public relations consultancies	
Blind Citizens Australia	4 272
Cultural Partners	71 610
Cultural Perspectives	126 328
Horizon Communications Group	41 679
Information Alternatives	10 780
Melanie James Consulting	15 223
Direct mail organisations	
CanMail	28 612
Pack & Send	5 200

Appendix 5

Freedom of information requests

Introduction

Section 8 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* requires the ABS to provide details on the structure of the ABS, and how members of the public can gain access to information held by the ABS.

Detail on the structure of the ABS can be found in Chapter 2 Overview of the ABS.

Information held by the ABS

Appendix table 5.1: Categories of documents in the possession of the ABS

Documents open to public access upon payment of a fee	The ABS does not hold any of these types of documents.
Documents available for purchase or customarily available free of charge	The ABS has a wide range of statistical publications available free of charge on its website (www.abs.gov.au), through ABS libraries and major public libraries. Charged publications can be purchased from ABS bookshops in some state offices and on the ABS website.
Government and Parliament	The ABS holds policy-related documents, ministerial briefings, ministerial correspondence, replies to parliamentary questions, and tabling documents.
Meetings and conferences	The ABS holds agenda papers, submissions, and records of proceedings of internal and external conferences, management meetings and workshops.
Statistical and statistical services projects	The ABS holds research, development and evaluation papers, records of consultations with suppliers and users of data, statistical classifications, lists of businesses, maps, data collection, processing and publication manuals and instructions, and mailing lists.
Administration and management	The ABS holds work program and planning documents, finance, staff and establishment papers and manuals, personnel files, recruitment files, selection and promotion of staff, staff development and training papers, officer services documents and tenders.
Privacy	The ABS holds a record of the extent and nature of ABS holdings of personal information, as contained in the <i>Personal Information Digest</i> published by the Privacy Commissioner.
General	<p>The ABS holds correspondence, papers, etc. filed by subject, manuals on more general subjects, reviews and administrative circulars.</p> <p>Note that a significant part of ABS information holdings is information collected under the <i>Census and Statistics Act 1905</i>. This information is exempt from the provisions of the <i>Freedom of Information Act 1982</i>.</p>

ABS freedom of information activities

Matters relating to the operation of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, within the ABS, are the responsibility of the Office of the Statistician, which is located in the ABS central office. Authority for decision making under this Act has been delegated to the Deputy Australian Statisticians, the First Assistant Statistician, Corporate Services Division, and the Assistant Statistician, Office of the Statistician.

The Office of the Statistician staff attend meetings of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Practitioner's Forum, run by the Australian Government Solicitor's Office.

The following table provides details of FOI activities during the years 2002–03 to 2006–07. One request was made to the ABS under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, during 2006–07.

Appendix table 5.2: Freedom of information activities, 2002–03 to 2006–07

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2006–07
Requests received	2	1	3	1
Decisions made				
Access granted in full	–	1	3	–
Access granted in part	2	–	–	1

Where to get information

Freedom of information inquiries

All inquiries concerning access to documents under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* may be directed to the Freedom of Information Contact Officer, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Locked Bag 10, Belconnen, ACT, 2616; telephone 02 6252 5731.

General information

The ABS offers an initial contact point for all information requests:

Telephone: 1300 135 070

Email: client.services@abs.gov.au

Facsimile: 1300 135 211

Mail: Client Services, ABS, GPO Box 796, Sydney, NSW, 2001

APPENDIX 6

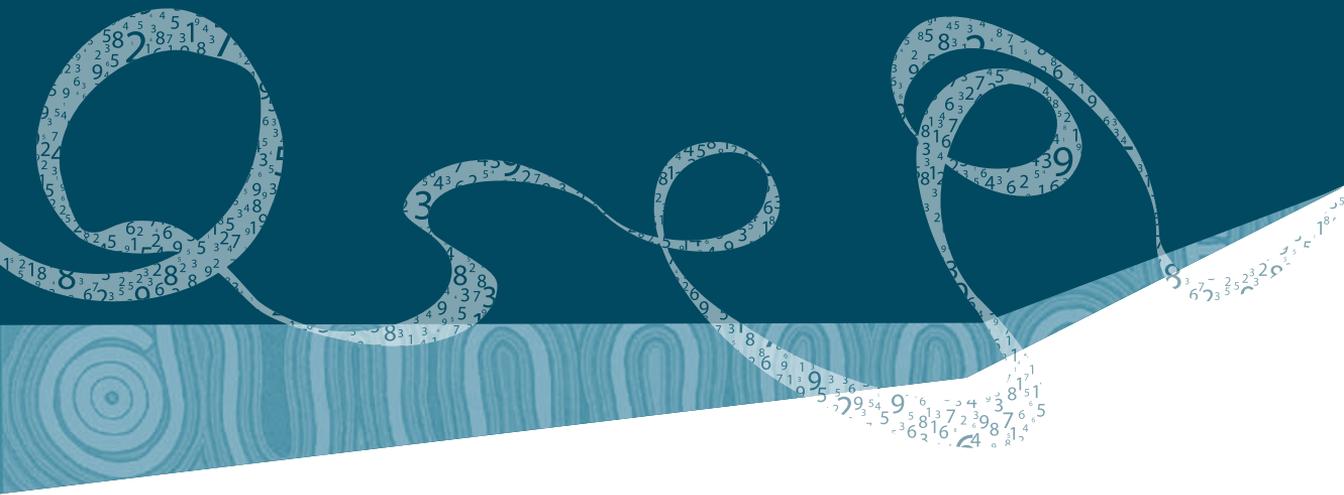
Online appendixes

The following appendixes are available in the online version of the annual report:

1. Disclosure of unidentified information
2. Professional papers by ABS officers
3. Submissions to parliamentary committees
4. Documents tabled in Parliament
5. Special articles in previous annual reports
6. Legal services expenditure

Section IX

GLOSSARY AND INDEX



GLOSSARY

of acronyms and abbreviations

ABARE	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
ACMA	Australian Communications and Media Authority
ABR	Australian Business Register
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABS Act	<i>Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975</i>
ABSDL	Australian Bureau of Statistics Data Laboratory
ABSBR	ABS Business Register
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AEI	Australian Economic Indicators
AGATSIS	Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics
AGIMO	Australian Government Information Management Office
AIFRS	Australian equivalents to the International Financial Reporting Standards
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIPRD	Australia Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development
ALRC	Australian Law Reform Commission
ANA	Australian National Accounts
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
APPA	Australian Pacific Privacy Authorities
APRA	Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
APS	Australian Public Service
ASAC	Australian Statistics Advisory Council
ASCO	Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASGC	Australian Standard Geographical Classification
ASIC	Australian Standard Industrial Classification
AST	Australian Social Trends
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AWA	Australian Workplace Agreement
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BLD	Business Longitudinal Database
BoP	Balance of Payments

BPM	Balance of Payments Manual
BPS	Badan Pusat Statistik (Statistics Indonesia)
BSSIP	Business Statistics Innovation Program
C&S Act	<i>Census and Statistics Act 1905</i>
CAI	Computer Assisted Interviewing
cat. no.	ABS catalogue number
CDE	Census Data Enhancement
CDS	Commonwealth Disability Strategy
CO	Central Office
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CUPS	Community of Users and Producers of Statistics
CURF	Confidentialised Unit Record File
CVG	Greenhouse Vehicle Guide
DAP	Disability Action Plan
DDA	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>
DEH	Department of the Environment and Heritage
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DHM	Division Heads Meetings
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DITR	Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
DPC	Data Processing Centre
DTEC	Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation
DTF	Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance
E2E	End-to-end
eCensus	Internet version of the form for the 2006 Census of Population and Housing
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESG	Economic Statistics Group
FaCSIA	Department of Family and Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs
FBT	Fringe Benefits Tax
FMA Act	<i>Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997</i>
FOI	Freedom of Information
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GFS	Government Finance Statistics
GPF	Government Partnership Fund
GSP	Gross State Product
GSS	General Social Survey
GST	Goods and Services Tax
GVG	Greenhouse Vehicle Guide
HES	Household Expenditure Survey
HILDA	Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia
HPI	House Price Index
HR DHM	Human Resources Division Heads Meeting
HSAG	Health Statistics Advisory Group
HSR	Health and Safety Representative
ICP	International Comparison Program
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Information Development Plan
IDW	Input Data Warehouse
IEM	Indigenous Engagement Manager
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPY	International Polar Year
ISCO	International Standard Classifications of Occupations
ISI	International Statistical Institute
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
IT	Information Technology
ITPI	International Trade Price Indexes
KNSO	Korean National Statistical Office
KRA	Key Result Area
L&D	Learning and Development
LEP	Library Extension Program
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LPI	Labour Price Index
LSAC	Longitudinal Study of Australian Children
LSIC	Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children
MAP	Measure of Australia's Progress
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MPHS	Multi-purpose Household Survey
MPS	Monthly Population Survey
MRT	Mineral Resources Tasmania
NATSIHS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NCATSIS	National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics
NCETS	National Centre for Education and Training Statistics
NCYSU	National Children and Youth Statistics Unit
NDN	National Data Network
NHIG	National Health Information Group
NHS	National Health Survey
NIRS	National Information and Referral Service
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRP	National Regional Profile
NSC	National Statistics Centre
NSO	National Statistical Organisation
NSS	National Statistical Service
NSTI	National Statistical Training Institute
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFPC	Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OHS Act	<i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991</i>
OPALS	Organisational, People and Learning Systems
PES	Post Enumeration Survey
PPI	Producer Price Indexes
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PSG	Populations Statistics Group
PGSP	Pacific Governance Support Program
Qld	Queensland
RADL	Remote Access Data Laboratory
RSE	Relative Standard Error
RSS	Really Simple Syndication
SA	South Australia
SCH	Statistical Clearing House
SEASABS	SEASonal analysis, ABS Standards
SEEA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounts
SEHQ	School Entrant Health Questionnaire
SES	Senior Executive Service
SLCD	Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset
SMS	Short Message System
SIAP	Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific

SMVU	Survey of Motor Vehicle Use
SNA	System of National Accounts
SNZ	Statistics New Zealand
SRA Act	<i>Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988</i>
Tas	Tasmania
TSD	Technology Services Division
TUS	Time Use Survey
UN	United Nations
UNSIAP	United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia Pacific
UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
UNSD	United Nations Statistical Division
Vic	Victoria
VNSO	Vanuatu National Statistics Office
VSISP	Vanuatu Statistical Institutional Strengthening Program
WA	Western Australia
WAIFS	WA Indicator Framework System
WPI	Wage Price Index

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