

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Forward Work Program 2008–09 to 2010–11

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Preface

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

The ABS continues to face a rapidly changing external environment. As expected, the new Government has changed a range of policy priorities, changed the focus of its interactions with the state and territory governments, and is seeking input into its longer-term strategies at events such as the 2020 Summit. The ABS must continue to work hard, so that it remains a key contributor of statistical information in this changing environment, being relevant and involved. The ABS also has to measure increasingly complex issues in the Australian economy, society and the environment, which make it more difficult to continue to produce relevant statistics.

Last year, the ABS implemented some significant changes to its organisational structure, which provided new opportunities for senior managers to pursue high priority strategic objectives. These objectives are associated with the National Statistical Service (NSS) initiative, which aims to strengthen and further develop Australia's national statistical system, and reinforce the ABS' statistical leadership role in that system. For example, when agencies plan and make strategic policy decisions, we want them to think of the ABS either as the natural home for the necessary statistical information that will allow the measurement and reporting on the success of the new policies, or as the source of statistical knowledge and expertise that can advise and assist them in their own statistical work.

It is also important that we work with others to establish our role in areas such as linking data, helping to shape thinking about the importance of development of appropriate governance, methods, policies and protocols that as far as possible are in keeping with our statistical values and relevant legislative requirements.

At the same time as the environment is changing, the ABS budget for 2008/09 and beyond is insufficient to sustain continuation of our current work program, and provides us with no capacity to take on additional work on behalf of government or other stakeholders. I have had no option but to reduce our planned work program for 2008-09, as well as cut back the administrative budget. The ABS is continuing to review its work program for the next few years, and is discussing its resource requirements with government. In the foreseeable future, however, the ABS will not be able to undertake new work without further funding or ceasing some other work in the existing work program.

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

Information about the full range of ABS publications and products is provided on the ABS web site <<http://www.abs.gov.au>>. For assistance in accessing ABS products, contact the National Information Referral Service. See Products and Services (page 10) for information on this service.

Brian Pink
Australian Statistician

July 2008

Notes to this Publication

Theme pages

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

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

Methods, classifications, concepts and standards

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

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

Resources

Resource costs presented in this publication reflect estimates for the latest completed financial year, and actual direct costs for the previous year. They are presented as a broad indication of the resources currently allocated to each program and should not be taken as an accurate basis for estimating future allocations – comparisons across programs can therefore be misleading.

Direct costs are those costs which can be linked directly to the production of program outputs. They include the salaries, internally charged computing costs and administrative costs of the organisational units making up the program area. Indirect costs, such as data collection and processing and corporate services provided by centralised support areas are not included.

The 2006-07 figures are actual accrual expenditure for that year. The 2007-08 figures are full year projections based on the agreed budget for the year. Forward year resources are not provided, as budget estimates have not yet been finalised.

For technology services, resources are reflected in aggregate against the Technology Services program. The internal cost to program areas using technology services on a cost recovered basis are also reflected in the program resources.

Staff usage

Staff usage figures comprise full-time staff, and full-time equivalent figures for part-time staff. Inoperative staff are excluded. Staff usage figures are outcomes for 2006-07.



Overview of the ABS

Census and Statistics Act 1905

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

Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975

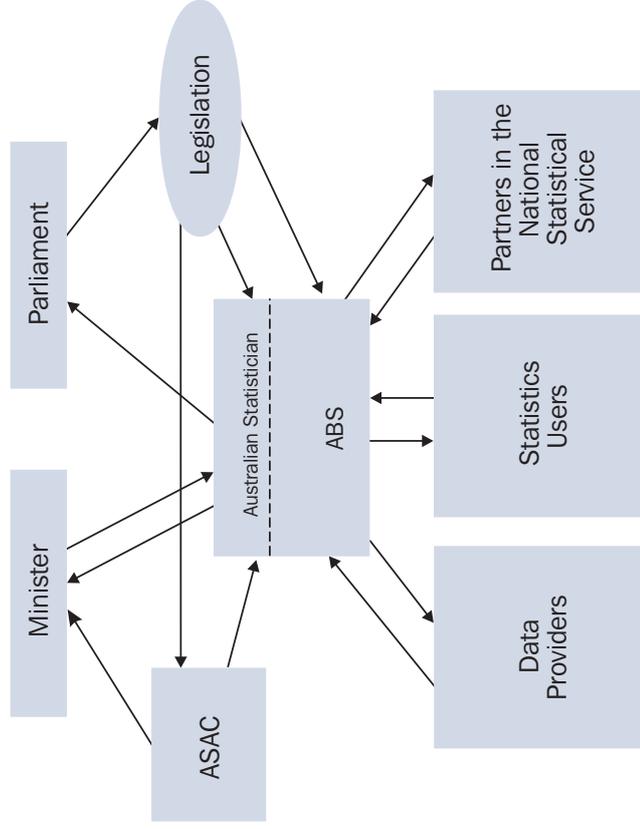
- Established and ensures the independence of both the ABS and the Australian Statistician
- Describes the functions of the ABS
- Requires ABS to advise parliament of proposals for new collections
- Established the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC)
- Requires ABS and ASAC to report to Parliament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

ABS Functions

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

ABS Mission

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



Statistics Users

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

Corporate Plan Objectives

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

Core Values

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

Corporate Governance - Key Fora

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

Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC)

Advise the Minister and Statistician on:

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

ABS Strategic Management

Corporate Plan

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

The latest ABS Corporate Plan was released in December 2005. The statement of mission, values, objectives and related strategies in the corporate plan provides the higher level framework within which the rolling ABS forward work program has been developed, and future work programs will be developed. It provides the broad context for ensuring we use our resources effectively and efficiently.

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

Mission

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

Values

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

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

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

Objectives

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

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

How the ABS Determines Statistical Priorities

The provision of a high quality national statistical service is a complex management exercise due to the diverse nature of user requirements and, in most instances, the lead time required to develop or update statistical collections. While the ABS recognises that it is impossible to satisfy all demands, we seek to react positively and responsibly to the demonstrated needs of its users. At the same time, we are conscious of the constraints on public spending and on the workload placed on providers of information for its collections. Continued effort is made to review and, where possible, reduce provider load.

How the ABS understands client needs

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

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

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

A list of ABS user groups is provided in the Appendix.

How the ABS determines its work program

The ABS mission statement and corporate plan provide the context and high level framework for making decisions on the ABS's forward work program.

The annual ABS planning cycle comprises a structured series of high level meetings and forums, where senior managers consider the relative priorities and competing resource requirements of program components. In doing this, particular attention is given to:

- input from user consultations
- the ABS strategic directions
- the cost imposed on respondents to collections, in terms of time and effort
- consideration of enterprise opportunities and risks
- prospective total resources available to the ABS within the period
- productivity gains that have been achieved or may be possible to achieve in the future
- the contribution statistical activities make to meeting National Statistical Service objectives, and
- the extent to which particular statistical activities, with user demand, continue to be justified in relation to other 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, taking into consideration the advice provided by ASAC.

How the ABS Operates

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

The statistical collection process

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

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



Functional areas undertaking statistical operations

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

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

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

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

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

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

The **Integration Collection Branch (ICB)** provides an integrated data collection service for the ABS across business, household and administrative data collections, including through the utilisation of a professional panel of home and office based interviewers. For business data collection, an important role of the ICB is the maintenance of survey frames. These are lists of Australian businesses that include details on contacts, structure and type of operations. It is from these frames that businesses are selected to participate in ABS surveys. The primary source of frames for economic surveys is the ABS Business Register. Population survey frames are based on the dwellings recorded in the most recent Census of Population and Housing, conducted five-yearly by the ABS.

Other business survey functions of ICB include: sample selection; questionnaire development and testing; questionnaire dispatch; data collection, including administrative data; basic checks for completeness of responses; non-response follow-up; handling of provider complaints; and key provider management. For household surveys, the ICB is responsible for sample generation and maintenance; interviewer recruitment, training and management; survey interviewing, data capture and coding of data collected; and provision of survey management information and performance reporting.

Supporting statistical operations

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

Methodology and Data Management Division (MDMD) has specific responsibilities for supporting the statistical collection process. MDMD provides advice on survey design, methods and on data quality through all stages of the survey cycle. The Division ensures ABS surveys are based on sound statistical principles and practices and that the statistics produced best meet survey design objectives, while maintaining data confidentiality. MDMD undertakes research on statistical methods to improve the efficiency and accuracy of ABS work, and provides leadership and support in the development, review and application of statistical classifications. Within MDMD, the **National Statistical Service Leadership Branch** undertakes a range of statistical leadership activities aimed at increasing the understanding and use of statistics by government, research organisations and the wider community.

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

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

Governance and Legislation

Corporate governance

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

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

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

- a planning cycle to ensure that the ABS work program reflects current and emerging statistical priorities of users, and is consistent with the ABS mission and overall strategic directions
- senior management committees involved in developing policies and strategies, identifying priorities and monitoring ABS' performance
- advisory bodies and user groups, which enable the ABS to consult widely with the user community about the ABS work program
- an audit and review program covering 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
- instructions and manuals to ensure staff have access to ABS policies and practices.

Senior management committees

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

The major senior management committees are as follows:

- ABS Management Meetings

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

- Executive Leadership Group Meetings (ELG)

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

- Senior Management Group Meetings (SMG)

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

- Protective Security Management Committee

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

■ Audit Committee

The ABS Audit Committee provides assurance to the Australian Statistician that: a comprehensive control framework is in place and is working effectively for all business systems; the operation and management of ABS systems are sufficiently adequate to ensure the ABS complies with all its legislative and other obligations; and externally published information generated by these systems 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 2007-08, the Committee included two experienced external members. The Audit Committee meets four times a year and reports to the executive meetings as appropriate.

Audit and risk management

The ABS has a Risk Management Framework, which provides a basis for identifying and mitigating risks that the ABS may be exposed to. In 2007, the ABS developed a new Risk Management Strategy, drawing on feedback from an external review of ABS' risk management activities undertaken in 2006-07, as well as the outcomes of the annual Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking exercise.

Implementation of the new strategy has commenced, initially focusing on a comprehensive review of the ABS' enterprise risks. These are risks that are strategic in nature and have the potential to significantly impact on the organisation. ABS senior management will be closely involved in monitoring and managing these risks.

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 and given priority. 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 have the responsibility for identifying and managing risks at the project level.

Authority and legislation

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

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

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

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

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

(c) any other matters relating generally to those statistical services.

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

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

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

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

Products and Services

Statistical releases

ABS releases comprise monthly, quarterly, annual, biennial and less frequent products as well as irregular products. In each year, there are over 700 statistical releases. The full range of products is available through the ABS website and a very small number of selected products are available, in print, from the National Information Referral Service.

Electronic products and data services

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

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

Information Skills Program (ISP)

The Information Skills Program (ISP) assists and encourages the informed, effective and increased use of ABS information by external clients through high quality and responsive training and other information literacy programs. Under the Library Extension Program (LEP), a program within the ISP, ABS publications in paper format are distributed to over 500 libraries. These include the National Library, state libraries, parliamentary libraries, all university libraries and a number of TAFE and public libraries.

National Information and Referral Service (NIRS)

The National Information and Referral Service (NIRS) is the main professional entry point to the ABS for basic telephone, email, and facsimile enquiries from clients. The NIRS also provides a referral service to clients, referring inquiries that cannot be met by the NIRS or self-help facilities to other parts of the ABS for servicing. Contact details for NIRS are listed on page 15.

Information and Statistical Consultancy Services

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

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

User funded surveys

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

Other services

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

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

Dissemination and Pricing Policy

Policy and principles

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

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

Objectives

The objectives of the ABS charging policy are to:

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

Community service obligation

The ABS fulfils the community service obligation for statistics by:

- including all published ABS information in the basic set, which is available for access on the ABS website, free of charge
- providing publications in paper format free of charge to all libraries participating in the ABS Library Extension Program
- offering a National Information and Referral Service.

Approaches to cost recovery

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

For products beyond the basic set, such as customised extraction of data, pricing is based on incremental (or avoidable) costs.

The ABS may also price a limited range of products on a commercial basis. This occurs where such products and services compete, or may compete, with similar products provided by others.

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

Top Structure

Australian Statistician



Brian Pink

Deputy Australian Statisticians



Ian Ewing
Macroeconomics
and Integration



Peter Harper
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Industry & Environment
Statistics



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First Assistant Statisticians



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Dina Neiger
Data Management
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National Statistical
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Chris Duffy
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Applications



Lane Masterton
Technology
Infrastructure



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Office of the
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Shirley Harrison
Human Resources



Beverley Forner
Business Support

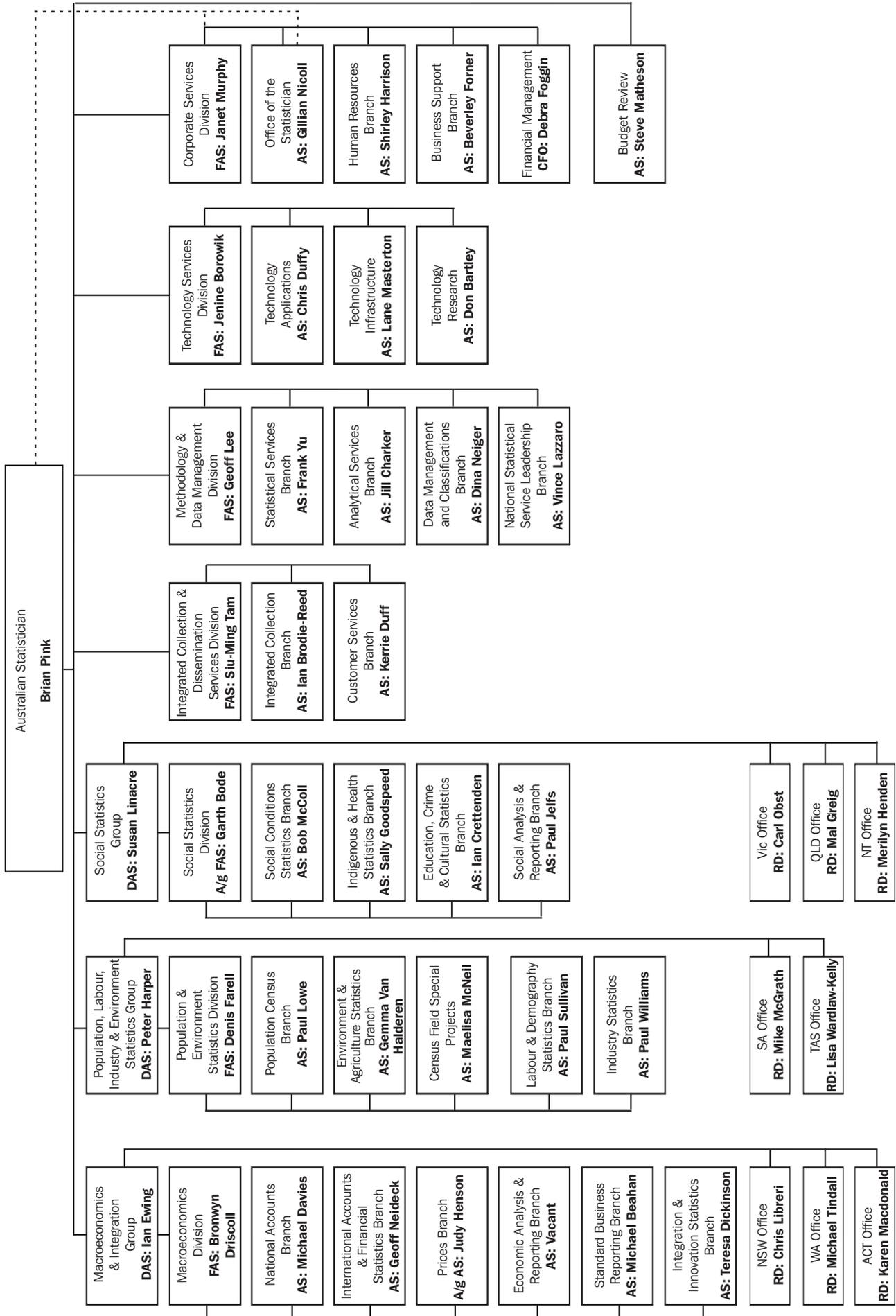


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Top Structure *continued*



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ABS FORWARD WORK PROGRAM 2008-09 TO 2010-11

ABS Strategic Directions

Introduction

The ABS work program is established in response to current and emerging statistical priorities of users and in the broader context of the ABS mission and overall strategic directions. The statistical drivers and demands of the government and community are broad ranging, and are increasing both in volume and complexity. As Australia's national statistical agency, the ABS has a responsibility to respond to these demands within the resources allocated to it. This statement of strategic directions therefore presents the broad objectives that the ABS has chosen to pursue, which shape its priorities and work program for the period 2008-09 to 2010-11.

Key drivers of the ABS work program

The Corporate Plan

The ABS Corporate Plan describes seven broad objectives that provide the framework for ABS forward work planning:

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

In recent years, the ABS has worked to strengthen client engagement and improve responsiveness to client needs, to raise the profile of its externally focussed activities, and to increase the informed use of statistics. The ABS will continue to build and maintain relationships with users and producers of statistics, ultimately to improve the strength and coherence of the National Statistical Service as a whole. Consistent with these aims, the forward work program for 2008-09 to 2010-11 places a strong emphasis on corporate objectives 1 and 2, and in particular, strategies aimed at progressing the NSS.

The National Statistical Service (NSS)

The NSS is at the core of ABS strategic directions over the next three years. The NSS, in which the ABS has a legislated leadership role, is the set of arrangements within Australia which provides an accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and meaningful picture of the economy, society and the environment to support the formulation and monitoring of policies. This picture is "painted" by the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of information sourced from administrative agencies or from specially commissioned surveys.

Government Priorities

The new federal government has a range of policy priorities, has changed the focus of its interactions with the State and Territory Governments and is seeking input into its longer term strategies at events such as the 2020 Summit. The work of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) across federal and state governments is highlighting the need for information for government decision making across all levels of government in Australia.

The ABS will remain a key contributor of statistical information, and will continue to be an advisor on statistical processes, in this changing environment. The ABS will work to shape and influence government information needs early in the planning process, contributing to a more responsive and relevant statistical service.

Demands for data linkage and microdata access

The research community's demand for microdata access and data linkage initiatives has grown significantly, as it researches the relationships between social and economic circumstances and the impact of government policies. The ABS will work with the research community to establish the ABS' role in this area. It will help to shape development of appropriate governance, methods, policies and protocols that are in keeping with ABS statistical values and relevant legislative requirements.

Simplified interactions with Government

There are increasing demands by information providers for simplified interactions with government. This is reflected in the federal government agenda that emphasises reductions in red tape and greater information sharing, by providing access to more convenient technology based facilities for data providers.

Funding for new work

Increasingly complex issues in the Australian economy, society and the environment mean that production of existing statistics has become commensurately more complex. The ABS resource base cannot continue to absorb these additional demands, and new work, however minor, must be funded externally, or be funded by the ABS discontinuing other, lower priority work. Where there is an ongoing requirement for new statistics, funding will be sought through the annual Budget process or some other agreed arrangement that embeds the funding in ABS' core program appropriation.

Improving productivity and developing staff capability

In an environment of increasing resource pressures and an increasingly tight labour market, the ABS will continue to ensure its staff are well skilled and equipped, and that they are well remunerated for their work. The ABS is seeking to identify areas where major corporate productivity improvements should be focussed. It will work to identify and quantify productivity savings as a result of these initiatives, to be captured to fund both interviewer and office-based staff pay rises.

Taking into account the drivers of the ABS work program, as well as the key enterprise opportunities and risks, the ABS has identified the following seven strategic directions for the next three years.

1. Build and maintain an adequate resource base to support the core ABS work program

The core work program is the long-standing ABS work-program that has been established to fulfil the obligations of a relevant national statistics office and to meet government, business and community needs. After many years of supporting many of the upgrades and extensions to the core work program from within the ABS budget, a good financial base needs to be established on which the ABS can build the core statistical work program for the future.

2. Progress the National Statistical Service (NSS) aspirations

In recent years the ABS has worked to strengthen client engagement and improve responsiveness to client needs, to raise the profile of its externally focussed activities, and to increase the informed use of statistics. The ABS will continue to build and maintain relationships with users and producers of statistics, ultimately to improve the strength and coherence of the NSS as a whole.

The NSS is at the core of ABS strategic directions over the next three years, although a rapidly changing external environment will impact on NSS capacity. The NSS is the work of a community of government agencies building a rich statistical picture for a better informed Australia. Conceptually it is the sum of an agreed set of statistical frameworks, principles, policies and data sources developed by, or available to, government agencies and instrumentalities within Australia that are used, or could be used, to produce official statistics, together with the skills and capabilities of the people involved. It will develop to be increasingly underpinned by a set of shared values and associated behaviours that shape and sustain the integrity and objectivity of official statistics.

ABS discussions have identified four broad areas which need to be aligned to achieve its vision of the National Statistical Service:

- **Valuing Statistics** - Government recognising the benefit of good quality information in decision making; community recognising the community value; community trust in confidentiality of data; statistical information that is trusted and accessible to all
- **Statistical Capability** - Influential people across the agencies of Australian governments with the skills and knowledge to unlock and exploit the statistical potential of the data in their custody, and to apply statistics to enable better public debate, research and decision-making; an Australian public that understands the statistical dimensions of Australia's economy, society and environment

ABS Strategic Directions *continued*

- **Statistical Infrastructure** - Any investment that facilitates the development or use of statistical information; useful over more than one application and is available for such use; making investments which improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the whole NSS
- **Statistical Content** - tapping into data held across governments, relevant data which meets statistical priorities directly related to stakeholder needs, high integrity, relevant, accessible, interpretable, timely, coherent, accurate official statistics.

3. Determine the next generation of statistical requirements and information management infrastructure requirements, and secure the necessary funding to enable this to occur. This includes an investment in innovation

The ABS is looking to a future that will require more integrated economic, social and environment information to better respond to cross-cutting policy issues. Significant steps forward will be required to address population well-being data gaps, social inclusion and Indigenous statistics. The ABS will provide improved leadership in addressing these data requirements for all tiers of government. Delivering spatially enabled and integrated statistics will be crucial, as will ensuring improved access to, and analysis of, microdata.

4. Develop a set of scenarios with regard to the office structure of the ABS, including: a work design; how best to secure the future workforce; and the implications of supporting an expanding NSS. Agree on a preferred modus operandi through to 2020

As a national organisation with a presence in Canberra and all states and territories, the ABS will consider what organisational and geographic structures, and related processes, can best position it for the next decade.

5. As a key information agency, maintain the ABS strategic knowledge base by investing in future workforce needs that will build on core capability and capacity

To meet the future challenges facing the ABS, staff will need to understand Australia's evolving information needs. The ABS will invest in the capability and capacity of its future workforce, so it is effective and efficient in the complex environment in which the ABS works, and is able to help the ABS adapt to that rapidly changing environment.

6. Continued standardisation and harmonisation of data collection requirements and methods across the Australian government, including through e-data initiatives

The Standard Business Reporting (SBR) project is a key initiative the ABS is undertaking to progress this strategic direction. The project has dual aims of simplifying the interactions with government, and reducing the duplication of data collection and use across government, by providing a single entry point for information providers. The ABS is working closely with a group of core Australian government agencies, led by Treasury, on the SBR project.

7. Developing a strategy to guide the ABS' leadership role in international statistics

The ABS is an active member of the international statistical community, contributing its efforts and resources across a wide range of activities and statistical fields. Its activities are focussed on building the capacity of developing countries' statistical systems, especially in the Asia-Pacific Region, as well as the development of international statistical standards and approaches. In the context of the many international demands on ABS expertise, a strategy will be developed to guide the ABS leadership role in international statistics.

NATIONAL STATISTICAL SERVICE

National Statistical Service Leadership

Program Manager

Vince Lazzaro
Assistant Statistician
National Statistical Service
Leadership Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.2

07/08 2.2

Staff usage 2006/07

15 staff years

References

National Statistical Service
www.nss.gov.au;
select Statistical Clearing House on the horizontal navigation bar

Objectives

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

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

Externally, the program provides leadership and support to: policy and research professionals through the provision of best practice statistical guides and tools to assist in their statistical activities; and inter-agency committees associated with progressing the NSS.

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

The focus of 2008 will be the inaugural NatStats08 Conference, which will provide a unique opportunity for key stakeholders from across the NSS to discuss strategies for improving statistics for the nation and become involved in the development and direction of the NSS.

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

Outputs

The program has the following outputs:

- policy and strategies for the ongoing development of the NSS
- best practice materials and tools for collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of survey and administrative by-product data
- NSS communication, which includes newsletters, seminars, presentations to training courses, the NatStats08 Conference and participation in other statistics related conferences
- secretariat services to the NSS Board and the Australian Government Statistical Forum, and participation in interdepartmental committees
- administration and delivery of the Australian Government Statistical Clearing House service, which provides a detailed assessment, suggestions for improvement, and formal approval of business surveys run by Australian government agencies.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- Support the development of a community of producers and users of official statistics and the development of statistical skills and capabilities - ongoing
- Host the NatStats 08 Conference in November 2008. The Conference will aim to raise the profile, understanding and commitment to developing national statistics; provide an opportunity for engagement on key policy issues; build stronger relationships with policy makers and opinion leaders; and promote the better utilisation of information resources across the nation.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies, to grow the National Statistical Service by enhancing statistical capabilities, and improving the accessibility and interpretability of relevant statistical content.
- Promote the development of policy and strategies for the NSS across government agencies and jurisdictions - ongoing
- Consult widely across all jurisdictions to formulate a draft statistical policy for Australia - May 2009
- Foster the statistical leadership capabilities of all ABS staff - ongoing
- Support a multi-layered engagement strategy for key clients - ongoing
- Expand the role of the Statistical Clearing House to include household surveys conducted by Australian Government agencies - June 2009.

STATISTICAL PROGRAMS

National Accounts

Program Manager

Michael Davies
Assistant Statistician
National Accounts
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 5.5

07/08 5.8

Staff usage 2006/07

64 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then National
Accounts

Under National Statistics
select National Accounts

Other references

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

Objectives

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

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

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

Outputs

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

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

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

From June 2008 annual Input-Output tables will be released. These tables provide a detailed articulation of the structure of economic production by detailing the flows of products into and between industries and their use for consumption, investment or export. The ABS has previously produced the tables on an irregular basis with the last release in 2006 (cat. no. 5209.0.55.001).

Publications and articles on special topics are released regularly, recent examples are: *Information Paper: Quality Dimensions of the Australian National Accounts, 2007*, *Information Paper: Introduction of revised international standards in ABS economic statistics in 2009, 2007 (jointly with International Accounts and Financial Statistics program)* and *Information Paper: Gross State Product using the Production approach GSP(P), 2007*.

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement the update of the international standard for the compilation of national accounts - the System of National Accounts - due November 2009
- implement the revised industry classification Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 - due November 2009
- produce Input-Output tables on an annual basis (first release June 2008) - ongoing
- review and improve national accounts compilation processes and methods - due December 2008.

International Accounts

Program Manager

Geoff Neideck
Assistant Statistician
International Accounts
and Financial Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 3.5

07/08 3.5

Staff usage 2006/07

34 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

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

Other references

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

A Guide to Australian Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Statistics (cat. no. 5362.0.55.001)

Objectives

The International Accounts program provides statistics on Australia's balance of payments (BOP) and international investment position (IIP). The statistics are compiled from a range of surveys and administrative data sources.

The provision of ongoing information on the activities of non-resident affiliates of Australian enterprises and Australian affiliates of non-resident enterprises is a currently unfunded but key development priority.

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

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

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

Outputs

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

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

The quarterly *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position, Australia* (cat. no. 5302.0) publication contains a comprehensive set of international accounts statistics including chain volume measures for trade in goods and services and seasonally adjusted data. Summary transactions of goods and services on a balance of payments conceptual basis, and more detailed presentations of exports and imports on a merchandise trade basis, are provided monthly in the publication *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0). Statistics providing further detail are also available, including by commodity and by major trading and financing countries.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate the implications of new international standards for international and national accounts, the Balance of Payments Manual, the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services, Benchmark Definition of Foreign Direct Investment and the System of National Accounts; and develop implementation strategies and inform users of the implications of the new standards - due December 2008
- implement new international standards for international and national accounts - due October 2009
- implement improved sources of data and methodologies for the insurance and government services components of international trade in services - due October 2009
- review and update concepts, sources and methods documentation to reflect the revised international standards - due December 2010
- develop a strategy for the collection and compilation of foreign affiliates statistics in consultation with key stakeholders - subject to funding
- investigate improved seasonal adjustment techniques in BOP series: ensuring greater coherence between related series; investigating adjustment of additional component series; and reducing revisions by using modelling - ongoing
- review international accounts data quality, identify components that pose a risk, and improve the conceptual and methodological information available to users - ongoing.

International Trade

Program Manager

Geoff Neideck
Assistant Statistician
International Accounts
and Financial Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 1.7

07/08 1.6

Staff usage 2006/07

24 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Foreign
Trade

Other references

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

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

Objectives

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

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

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

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

Outputs

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

Monthly information on exports and imports of goods and services, on the preferred balance of payments basis, is released in *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia* (cat. no. 5368.0). Seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are included, with analysis and comments on the monthly results. The publication includes a selection of tables showing merchandise exports and imports data on a recorded trade basis. Detailed merchandise export statistics are also made available electronically to clients. Very detailed merchandise trade data can be obtained from ABS Client Services. More detailed international trade in services data and data by partner country and state are released annually, as data cubes, on a calendar year and financial year basis, via the ABS web site.

Merchandise trade statistics are classified by commodity, country of trading partner, state, industry of origin and broad economic category.

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

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate the implications for merchandise trade statistics of new international standards for the Balance of Payments Manual, the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services and the System of National Accounts; inform users of the implications of the new standards - due December 2008
- review requirements for and methodology used to produce annual data on counts and characteristics of exporters - due December 2008
- implement new international standards for international and national accounts - due October 2009
- subject to user consultation, release an updated article on export and import currencies - due December 2009
- review and update concepts, sources and methods documentation to reflect changes in sources and methodologies and the revised international standards - due December 2010
- contribute to the development of an updated manual on the compilation of international merchandise trade statistics - due 2011.

Financial Statistics

Program Manager

Geoff Neideck
Assistant Statistician
International Accounts
and Financial Statistics
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 1.8

07/08 1.8

Staff usage 2006/07

16 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Finance

Objectives

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. The statistics are sourced from several statistical surveys and administrative data sources.

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

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

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

Outputs

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

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

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

A range of tailored aggregations of financial statistics are also undertaken to meet the needs of individual clients.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- investigate the implications of new international standards for international and national accounts - the System of National Accounts (SNA) and the Balance of Payments Manual (BPM); inform users of the implications of the new standards - due progressively to December 2008
- conduct a review of financial statistics, in consultation with key users and providers, including a review of sources and uses of data and implement recommendations. This will include in consultation with key users, implementing the recommendations of the review of the lending finance publications, in particular, bringing forward release dates, enhancing content and reviewing frequency of lending finance statistics - due December 2009
- plan and implement data collection changes consequent to the SNA and BPM standards changes in liaison with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority, other providers and major statistical users - due progressively to December 2009
- develop concepts, sources and methods documentation for Managed Funds, following finalisation of the financial statistics review - due June 2010
- review financial statistics data quality, identify components that pose a risk, and improve the conceptual and methodological information available to users - ongoing.

Prices

Program Manager

Judy Henson
Assistant Statistician (A/g)
Prices Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 10.4

07/08 10.6

Staff usage 2006/07

133 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Prices

Other references

Australian Consumer Price Index: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6461.0)

A Guide to the Consumer Price Index: 15th Series (cat. no. 6440.0)

A Guide to the House Price Index (cat. no. 6464.0)

Producer and International Trade Price Indexes: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6429.0)

Labour Price Index: Concepts, Sources and Methods (cat. no. 6351.0.55.001)

Objectives

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

The main clients for the program's outputs are the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Treasury, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian government and state government agencies whose payments are indexed, economic analysts, and the general business community.

The main uses of the CPI are:

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

The main uses of the HPI are:

- as a measure of price changes for established houses and for project homes
- for analysis of trends in the housing market, and
- for production of estimates of the value of the housing stock.

The main uses of the LPI/WPI are:

- as a measure of wage inflation
- to inform wage setting negotiations, and
- for the indexation of business contracts.

The main uses of the PPIs and ITPIs are:

- for production of volume estimates of components of the Australian national accounts
- as a guide to future inflationary trends, and
- for indexation of business contracts.

Outputs

The main program outputs are the following quarterly publications:

- *Consumer Price Index, Australia* (cat. no. 6401.0) provides estimates of changes in the prices of goods and services purchased by metropolitan households. *Average Retail Prices of Selected Items, Eight Capital Cities* (cat. no. 6403.0.55.001) is an ancillary publication that presents average retail prices of selected items for the eight Australian capital cities
- *House Price Indexes: Eight Capital Cities* (cat. no. 6416.0) provides estimates of changes in house prices in each of the eight Australian capital cities. Price indexes are presented separately for established houses and for project homes
- *Producer Price Indexes, Australia* (cat. no. 6427.0) provides estimates of the changes in the prices of goods and services produced and used by businesses, and *International Trade Price Indexes, Australia* (cat. no. 6457.0) provides estimates of changes in the prices of Australia's exports and imports
- *Labour Price Index, Australia* (cat. no. 6345.0) provides estimates of changes in the average wage and salary costs of employee jobs in the Australian labour market. The September quarter issue each year contains estimates of key non-wage labour costs.

A range of special data services is available on request.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- update ITPIs for the revision to both the Harmonized System and Standard International Trade Classification - due October 2008
- undertake a review of the PPIs by stage of production (SOP) - due January 2009
- improve CPI treatment of services that have complex pricing mechanisms - telecommunications (due October 2008) and utilities (due April 2009)
- expand hedonic price indexes to cover laptops/notebooks (CPI and PPI) - due October 2008
- classify the PPIs and the LPI according to the revised industry classification (ANZSIC 2006) - due November 2009 and October 2009
- undertake major public review of the CPI - due end 2010
- introduce the 16th series CPI (including updated household expenditure weights) for the September quarter 2011 - due October 2011.

Public Sector Accounts

Program Manager

Geoff Neideck
Assistant Statistician
International Accounts and
Financial Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.4

07/08 2.4

Staff usage 2006/07

28 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then
Government Finance
Statistics

Other references

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

Objectives

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

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

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

Outputs

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

- an operating statement, balance sheet and cash flow statement for all levels of government. Key GFS accruals measures such as the net operating balance, net lending/borrowing, and net worth are provided. A cash-based surplus/deficit is also produced
- revenue from taxation of the Australian Government, the state governments and local government authorities in Australia
- statistics on government expenditure in the field of education.

The main publication is *Government Finance Statistics, Australia* (cat. no. 5512.0), which provides operating statements, balance sheets and cash flow statements for the Australian Government, state and territory governments and their public non-financial corporations for the most recent financial year.

A quarterly publication, *Government Finance Statistics, Australia* (cat. no. 5519.0.55.001), provides general government and public non-financial corporations sector aggregates for input to the Australian national accounts.

Other publications produced are *Government Financial Estimates, Australia* (cat. no. 5501.0.55.001), which provides initial budget forecasts compiled by each jurisdiction on a GFS basis, *Taxation Revenue, Australia* (cat. no. 5506.0), and *Government Finance Statistics, Education, Australia* (cat. no. 5518.0.55.001).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- assist the treasury and/or the department of finance in each jurisdiction with implementation and interpretative issues associated with the adoption of the GFS-GAAP (Generally Accepted Accounting Principles) harmonised financial reporting basis represented by the new accounting standard AASB 1049 (Whole of Government and General Government Sector Financial Reporting by Governments) - ongoing
- implement relevant aspects of the forthcoming update to the System of National Accounts in GFS - due September 2009
- continued improvement in the quality and uniformity of Australia's GFS - ongoing.

Business Indicators

Program Manager

Bronwyn Driscoll
First Assistant Statistician
Macroeconomics Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 4.0

07/08 3.5

Staff usage 2006/07

34 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Business
Indicators

Under Themes select
Industry, then Retail

Objectives

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

- monthly statistics of turnover by retail and selected service industries
- quarterly statistics of company profits, inventories, sales and labour costs
- quarterly statistics of actual and expected new capital expenditure
- quarterly statistics of actual and expected mineral and petroleum exploration
- bi-annual statistics of expected mineral and petroleum expenditure.

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

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

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

Outputs

The key statistical outputs of the program are the monthly publication *Retail Trade, Australia* (cat. no. 8501.0) and the quarterly publications *Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure, Australia* (cat. no. 5625.0), *Mineral and Petroleum Exploration, Australia* (cat. no. 8412.0) and *Business Indicators, Australia* (cat. no. 5676.0). The latter provides information on sales, labour costs, company profits and inventories. Each publication contains both national and state level data and estimates in original, seasonally adjusted and trend terms. In addition, the publications cat. nos: 8501.0; 5625.0; and 5676.0; present current price data by industry and, where appropriate, estimates are presented as chain volume measures.

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- continue the development of Business Activity Statement (BAS) data and Business Income Tax data, so as to facilitate wider application of data substitution in ABS statistical series - due June 2009
- investigate increasing the coverage of the New Capital Expenditure Survey through the use of BAS data, to include non-employing businesses - due December 2008
- develop estimates of quarterly business indicators that increase the coverage to include non-employing businesses - due December 2009
- develop systems and procedures to introduce a redesigned monthly Retail trade Survey to meet ABS budgetary requirements - due July 2008
- develop systems and procedures to introduce the revised industry classification (ANZSIC 2006) for the monthly retail trade, quarterly business indicators, and new capital expenditure statistical outputs - due December 2008
- implement ANZSIC 2006 for the monthly retail trade, quarterly business indicators, and new capital expenditure statistical outputs - due September 2009.

Innovation and Technology

Program Manager

Teresa Dickinson
Assistant Statistician
Integration and
Innovation Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.2

07/08 2.4

Staff usage 2006/07

27 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Innovation,
Science & Technology

Objectives

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

Clients of the program include:

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

Outputs

The program produces a range of statistical outputs, showing:

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

The program provides input to the development of the ICT satellite account for the Australian national accounts.

The program participates, with national and international statistical agencies, in the review and development of statistical standards and frameworks in relevant fields of statistics, including a 2008 revision of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification. Research papers and discussion papers are prepared and made available via the ABS web site.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- publish results from the 2006-07 survey of Research and Experimental Development for the Business sector - due August 2008
- publish results from the 2006-07 surveys of Research and Experimental Development for the Business, Government and Private Non-profit sectors - due August 2008
- define the ICT industry in terms of Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) 2006 and publish results from the 2006-07 Information and Communication Technology Industry Survey (ICTIS) - due August 2008
- publish data from the 2006-07 Innovation module - due October 2008
- in consultation with users, determine the requirements for content in the Business Characteristics survey (BCS) - including analytical requirements of the Business Longitudinal Database - in the areas of innovation, use of information technology and other characteristics - due June 2009
- the introduction of ANZSIC 2006 to Research and Experimental Development for the Business and BCS - due 2008
- incorporation of new Australian and NZ Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) and National Accounts Branch requirements into R&D collections - due 2009
- discussions and investigations on emerging technologies - ongoing.

Business Demographics

Program Manager

Teresa Dickinson
Assistant Statistician
Integration and
Innovation Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 1.4

07/08 0.6

Staff usage 2006/07

17 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Economy, then Business
Demography

Objectives

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

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

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

Outputs

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

The final issue of *Characteristics of Small Business, Australia* (cat. no. 8127.0) was released early in 2007. It will be replaced by a range of thematic outputs sourced from the Census of Population and Housing and a subset of ABS household surveys that collect information of relevance to small business policy-makers.

These outputs, together with a range of relevant information, will be loaded to the Business Demographics theme page on the ABS Website.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- support a range of developments of both the Business Longitudinal Database and use of administrative data to understand business demography - ongoing
- develop concepts, sources and methods for producing regional business statistics. This will include the facility to produce counts of businesses by flexible geographic areas, in part to improve the capacity of the ABS to respond to emergencies such as cyclones and the drought. Secondly, regional income and production statistics will be developed using various administrative data sources - ongoing.

Economy Wide Statistics

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.4

07/08 2.5

Staff usage 2006/07

22 staff years

Objectives

The Economy Wide Statistics program is responsible for the provision of annual statistics, which 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 taxation data provided by the Australian Taxation Office.

The information is used to provide industry benchmark statistics that monitor the economy in regard to the business cycle, and to support the compilation of the Australian national accounts.

The main clients of the program within the ABS are the National Accounts Branch and the Business Demographics National Statistics Centre. External clients include Australian and state and territory government agencies, industry organisations, financial analysts and academic institutions.

Outputs

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

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review the data collection forms for the Annual Integrated Collection (AIC) with the objective of reducing provider load, simplifying estimation and better integrating the data, by minimising the different form types and the use of tailored forms - due December 2008
- develop a long term program of industry specific collections for the 2009-10 reference year and beyond to provide detailed financial data, product detail and activity type data, as well as alternative industry views of various activities, to meet the highest priority client needs - due June 2009
- develop and implement new methods to collect data on industry inputs and outputs - due December 2008
- develop and implement new stratification benchmarks and sample allocations for the AIC for 2008-09 - due June 2009
- release outputs for the 2007-08 reference year - due July 2009
- extend the depth and quality of industry statistics through the use of business taxation and other administrative data, and synthetic estimation and/or modelling techniques as appropriate - due December 2009.

Agriculture

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Environment & Agriculture
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 4.4

07/08 4.4

Staff usage 2006/07

58 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then
Agriculture

Objectives

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

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

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

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

Data from this program's collections are also used within the ABS in the compilation of the Australian national accounts.

Outputs

Estimates of the quantity of agricultural commodities produced each year, as well as some data on aspects related to production, are available from the annual commodity collection and published in *Agricultural Commodities, Australia* (cat. no. 7121.0). Preliminary estimates for the main commodities are released in *Principal Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary* (cat. no. 7111.0). Data related to the value of agricultural commodities are published annually in *Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia* (cat. no. 7503.0) with preliminary value figures available in *Value of Principal Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, Preliminary* (cat. no. 7501.0). Data showing the structure of agricultural industries in terms of the number of farms within each industry, and the distribution of those farms based on both economic and physical size, are also provided.

The 2000-01 and 2005-06 Agricultural Census data are available in the form of an e-magazine on the ABS web page. This publication *Agricultural Commodities: Small Area Data, Australia* (cat. no. 7125.0) provides sub-state statistics at statistical division, statistical local area and natural resource management region levels for a broad range of commodities.

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

Estimates of the stocks of grain on hand are also collected and published at various times.

Details of agricultural water use and management are available annually in *Water Use on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4618.0).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop web-based products for 2006 Agricultural Census - due December 2008
- strategically review the content of the agriculture commodity survey program - due June 2009
- produce a strategic development plan for the 2010-11 Agricultural Census - due December 2008
- develop an ongoing address-coding strategy for the agriculture commodity survey program - due December 2008
- develop methods of using business taxation data to provide financial information about components of the agriculture industry - due June 2009
- continue work on the 2007-2010 intercensal program of agriculture surveys using an Australian Business Register-based frame and the ANZSIC 2006 industry classification - ongoing.

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 0.3

07/08 0.3

Staff usage 2006/07

4 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Mining

Objectives

The Mining program provides 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.

The main clients of the program include a range of Australian and state government agencies, industry organisations, and financial and academic institutions. Government agencies such as: the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism; the state and territory departments responsible for mining; Geoscience Australia; and the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE), use mining and exploration data in economic analysis, forecasting, the formulation of policies in respect of the various mining industries, the management of the nation's mineral resources, and preparing briefs for the heads of their organisations. ABS mining statistics are also used in a number of ABARE publications.

Industry organisations use mining and exploration data for research and monitoring developments in the mining industry.

Data from this program's collections are also used within the ABS in the production of economy wide statistics and the compilation of the Australian national accounts.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program include data about the structure and performance of the mining industry (including services to mining), electricity supply, gas supply, and water, sewerage and drainage industries. These consist of national estimates of employment, income, labour costs and other expenses, operating profit before tax, capital expenditure, industry value added, and business performance ratios. State/territory estimates are produced for the electricity supply industry and, of key variables, for the mining industry (excluding services to mining). The program also publishes data on the quantity and value of production of minerals based on information provided by state and territory Mines Departments, quarterly data of actual and expected expenditure on mineral and petroleum exploration, and the metres drilled for mineral exploration.

Structural and performance data are presented in the publications *Mining Operations, Australia* (cat. no. 8415.0), which also includes the mineral production data; and *Electricity, Gas, Water and Sewerage Operations, Australia* (cat. no. 8226.0). The quarterly publication of exploration data is *Mineral and Petroleum Exploration, Australia* (cat. no. 8412.0). Tailored information is also available on request on a consultancy basis. Summary data, including key performance indicators, for the mining industry are released through the Mining theme page on the ABS web site. Serving as a portal to mining information, this theme page also contains other internal and external sources of data and articles as well as information about ABS statistical collections relating to this industry.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- release outputs for the 2006-07 reference year based on the new estimation methodology and the new industry classification (ANZSIC 2006) - due August 2008
- develop and implement appropriate bridging strategies to adjust previous years outputs to a basis consistent with the 2006-07 outputs - due July 2008.

Manufacturing

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.1

07/08 2.1

Staff usage 2006/07

28 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then
Manufacturing

Objectives

The Manufacturing program provides statistics on the structure, financial operations, performance and production of the manufacturing industry.

The main clients of the program are Australian government and state government agencies, especially those with industry or business responsibilities. Umbrella industry bodies and individual industry associations are also key clients.

Manufacturing data are used to monitor changes in the performance of manufacturing industries and to analyse potential effects of policy proposals. Numerous business, academic and general clients make use of data for specific manufacturing industries or manufacturing data covering particular states and territories (and regions in census years, currently every fifth year).

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

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are an extensive range of annual structural and performance data about manufacturing businesses as well as a limited range of quarterly commodity production data. National data include estimates of employment, income, labour costs and other expenses, operating profit before tax, capital expenditure, and industry value added. State and territory data for manufacturing consist of estimates of employment, wages and salaries, sales of goods and services, and industry value added.

Structural and performance data are presented in *Manufacturing Industry, Australia* (cat. no. 8221.0). Corresponding electronic publications for state data (cat. nos. 8221.1.55.001 to 8221.6.55.001) are produced every fifth year, when the collection is conducted as a census. Sub-state data are also produced in census years to show regional activity patterns of manufacturing industries. Annual estimates of value of sales of commodities produced by manufacturing businesses are available on request on a consultancy basis, as are finer dissections of industry and/or data items. Some key performance indicators for the industry are released through the Manufacturing statistics theme page on the ABS web site. Serving as a portal to manufacturing information, the theme page also contains other internal and external sources of data and articles, as well as information about ABS statistical collections relating to this industry.

Sub-annual production data are available for a small set of commodities. The program also produces a range of detailed annual and sub-annual data about wine production and sales.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- release outputs from the 2006-07 reference year Manufacturing Census - due December 2008
- assess needs for detailed manufacturing industry data as part of wider review of industry statistics - due June 2009.

Construction

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.1

07/08 2.1

Staff usage 2006/07

27 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Building
and Construction

Objectives

The Construction program provides regular data on levels of activity in residential building, non-residential building and engineering construction. It also provides periodic statistics on the structure, performance and characteristics of the construction industry.

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

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

Outputs

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

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

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- review the mix of electronic and hardcopy products output by the program - due December 2008
- review the Construction industries survey program, with particular areas of consideration being the integration of the construction industry survey within the suite of annual collections - due June 2009
- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the construction collections, including adoption of the use of autocoding, the ABS' economic data management and storage facility, the Information Data Warehouse and the ABS imputation and estimation systems as appropriate for the Building Activity Survey - due December 2009.

Transport

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 1.2

07/08 0.9

Staff usage 2006/07

14 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Transport

Objectives

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.

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

Statistics from the transport collections are used to assist in policy and planning deliberations by governments and transport organisations, particularly in the areas of long term planning, the regulation of road transport operators and for accident exposure and fuel use analysis.

Information about the vehicle fleet provides a measure of the stock of vehicles registered for road use at a point in time and supports the study of links between demographic change and vehicle ownership and use. Statistics on new motor vehicle sales provide an economic indicator of consumer confidence.

Outputs

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- Establishment of a Transport Statistics Network to assist in formulating priorities for statistics on transport, promote understanding and greater use of the range of transport data already available and encourage the use of common frameworks and standards - due December 2008
- Review the Transport industries survey program, with particular areas of consideration being the transport industry survey, freight logistics and Survey of Motor Vehicle Use - due December 2008
- Implement, subject to funding, outcomes of the review of the transport survey program - ongoing from 2009.

Service Industries

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 3.2

07/08 3.3

Staff usage 2006/07

38 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Service
Industries Statistics

Objectives

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 food services; transport, postal and warehousing; information media and telecommunications; rental, hiring and real estate services; professional, scientific and technical services; administrative and support services; health care and social assistance; arts; recreation; and personal services.

Collections of selected service industries are undertaken in response to specifically identified user needs. Clients vary from collection to collection, but generally include Australian government and state and territory government departments responsible for industry policy, and the government agencies and industry associations relevant to the particular industry under study. The information provided from these collections is used for industry planning and performance analysis and other government policy issues. The National Accounts program is also a key client of the program.

Outputs

The program produces a range of outputs, including publications and special data services, each year for selected service industries. These outputs provide information on activities, income, expenses, operating profit before tax, employment and other key statistics for the industries under study.

Outputs for the 2004-05 reference year included pubs, clubs, sport and gambling services.

Outputs for the 2005-06 reference year covered the retail and wholesale industries and tourism marketing expenditure.

Outputs for the 2006-07 reference year covered cafes and restaurants; accommodation; television, film and video production; music and theatre production; and performing arts venues.

Outputs for the 2007-08 reference year will cover museums and legal practices.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- adopt new methodologies and technologies for the processing and management of the Service Industries surveys, including adoption of the full suite of contemporary corporate systems - due October 2008
- examine the possibilities of using alternative industry views to address priority requirements such as the Government's action agenda program - due December 2009.

Program Manager

Paul Williams
Assistant Statistician
Industry Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 0.5

07/08 0.6

Staff usage 2006/07

7 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Industry, then Tourism

Other references

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

Objectives

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

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

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

Outputs

The main output of the program is the quarterly publication *Tourist Accommodation, Australia* (cat. no. 8635.0). This publication provides detailed demand and supply data relating to hotels, motels and guest houses with 15 or more rooms, and serviced apartments with 15 or more units (derived from the Survey of Tourist Accommodation). As a result of the Tourism White Paper, the ABS has expanded the survey to include smaller establishments and other accommodation types for the reference periods March quarter 2005 to December quarter 2008.

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

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

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- in partnership with Tourism Australia and the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism investigate requirements for tourism statistics, statistical frameworks and classifications - due December 2008
- review the Australian Standard Classification of Visitor Accommodation to ensure that it reflects the current tourism industry structure and, where relevant and possible, is integrated with international standards - due December 2008
- contribute to the UN World Tourism Organisation and other international bodies as they examine statistical definitions and classifications - ongoing.

Economic Analysis and Reporting

Program Manager

Vacant
Assistant Statistician
Economic Analysis and
Reporting Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

07/08 1.2

Objectives

The Economic Analysis and Reporting program was established in mid 2007. It provides enhanced value to ABS business micro-data collections through conducting policy relevant analyses and publishing the findings of those studies. In addition it conducts consultations with the wider analytical and public policy development community in Australia, to ensure it understands evolving analytical and policy imperatives, in order to maintain relevance in its own studies as well as the analytical use-value of the ABS business micro-data collections.

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

Together with the Analytical Services Branch (ASB) and the Analysis and Special Projects Branch (ASPB), Economic Analysis and Reporting develops and implements initiatives to promote the 'community of analysts' within the ABS, and provides secretariat support to the ABS analytical community governance vehicles.

Outputs

A number of outputs are produced by the program. They range from a compendium publication on a monthly release cycle to releases that describe the detailed results of findings arising from specific research topics. Such research is aimed at informing the debate in respect of some of the key questions of current concern to policy makers and others with an interest in fundamental economic issues.

The key ongoing publications are:

- *Australian Economic Indicators* (cat. no 1350.0) - a monthly release that brings together a wide range of contemporary information useful for monitoring domestic and global economic conditions
- *Experimental Estimates of Industry Multifactor Productivity* (cat. no 5260.0.55.002) - an annual release that presents a range of productivity estimates at the industry level, in respect of those industries that comprise the market sector in the national accounts.

Additionally, reports presenting the results of the analytic projects undertaken are published on a topic by topic basis. These analyses are mainly, but not exclusively, based on the firm level information contained in the business longitudinal database currently being populated by the ABS. The first of these papers, using census data, is *Measuring Human Capital Flows for Australia: A Lifetime Labour Income Approach* (cat. no 1351.0.55.023).

The annual productivity measures presented in *Australian System of National Accounts* (cat. no 5204.0) is also a key output of the program.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- establish (both within and outside the ABS), together with ASB and ASPB, the credentials and value of the 'analytical community' initiatives recently undertaken within the ABS - ongoing
- progress the Industry Level Experimental Estimates of Productivity into an annual release of widely accepted quality - due 2009
- establish, together with ASB and ASPB, a core program of policy relevant longitudinal business analyses based upon the Business Longitudinal Database (BLD) and other associated data - due 2010
- enhance the range of business datasets linked to the BLD to add to the scope and comprehensiveness of analyses using the BLD - ongoing
- establish an enhanced profile for the ABS' BLD based analytical work in international business-microdata analysis fora - due 2010-11.

Environment and Energy

Program Manager

Gemma Van Halderen
Assistant Statistician
Environment & Agriculture
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.7

07/08 2.8

Staff usage 2006/07

31 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Environment and Energy,
then Environment

Objectives

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

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

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

Data usage is varied and includes the formulation of policies, economic analysis, research and forecasting - all of which assist in managing the nation's environment.

Outputs

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

- environmental accounts to understand the linkages between the availability, use and management of natural resources and economic activity. The ABS environmental accounts program currently features a four yearly *Water Account Australia* (cat. no. 4610.0) but other environmental accounts such as energy and greenhouse gas emissions, minerals, forests and fish accounts, have been compiled previously
- biennial information on NRM issues and problems at the regional level in *Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4620.0)
- agricultural water use and management information in *Water Use on Australian Farms* (cat. no. 4618.0)
- household attitude and behaviour statistics relating to water, energy, transport and waste issues in *Environmental Issues: People's Views and Practices* (cat. no. 4602.0)
- an annual compendium of environmental issues and trends, *Australia's Environment: Issues and Trends* (cat. no. 4613.0)
- research-based outputs from experimental projects, such as; *Land Management: Fitzroy and Livingstone Shires Queensland* (cat. no. 4651.0) and *Research Paper: Developing An Alternative View of Electricity and Gas Supply Activity in Australia* (cat. no. 4647.0.55.001).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- improve Australia's system of environment statistics. More specifically, and subject to funding:
 - establish a National Environmental Information System - ongoing
 - compile and disseminate regular national environmental accounts - ongoing
 - develop and implement a strategy for an economy-wide environmental survey of Australian businesses - development due June 2009 - implementation ongoing
- engage in Council of Australian Governments (COAG) climate change, streamlining energy and greenhouse gas reporting, and Australian Emissions Trading scheme initiatives - ongoing
- undertake a 2007-08 Energy Supply Survey - for publication in August 2009
- develop and produce a consolidated Energy and Emissions Account for Australia: 2005-06 - due December 2009
- engage in Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and Water Act 2007 initiatives, particularly the development of National Water Information Standards and a National Water Account by the Bureau of Meteorology - ongoing
- development of Water Account, Australia, 2008-09 - for publication in May 2011
- investigate methods of identifying change in Australian land parcels over time - due December 2008
- develop an ongoing NRM statistics program - due June 2009
- undertake a benchmark survey of current agricultural land management practices - due May 2009.

Social Analysis and Reporting

Program Manager

Paul Jelfs
Assistant Statistician
Social Analysis & Reporting
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 1.1

07/08 1.7

Staff usage 2006/07

13 staff years

Objectives

The Social Analysis and Reporting program informs the government and the community of social conditions and progress in Australia. It draws together data and analysis both from within the ABS and from a range of other sources, and produces reports covering a wide range of issues. These reports contain up to date statistics and incorporate commentary about, and explanation of, the statistics. The reports include analysis of current circumstances, how circumstances have changed over time, how different groups of people have been affected, and how various factors may have accounted for observed trends.

The reports provide information on the wellbeing of the population, the extent of need and disadvantage in society, contemporary social issues, the interrelationships between economic, social and environmental aspects of life, and whether life in Australia is getting better.

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

Outputs

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

- *Australian Social Trends* (cat. no. 4102.0) – an annual flagship publication that contains articles on contemporary social issues and a range of social indicators covering major areas of social concern (such as health, work, and family and community).
- *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0), published every five years, and *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001), an annual web-based product, present a national summary of many of the key areas of economic, social and environmental progress, and discuss how they are linked with one another.

Seminars based on *Australian Social Trends* (cat. no. 4102.0) and *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0) are conducted across Australia in some years for external clients.

The publication *Measuring Wellbeing: Frameworks for Australian Social Statistics* (cat. no. 4160.0) describes the conceptual frameworks underpinning ABS work in social statistics within each area of social concern.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- continue the annual publication *Australian Social Trends* (cat. no. 4102.0), ensuring that the articles and social indicators reflect current and emerging social concerns – ongoing
- review content to ensure relevance and publish *Measures of Australia's Progress* (cat. no. 1370.0) on a regular basis (next release planned for 2011), and *Measures of Australia's Progress: Summary Indicators, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 1383.0.55.001) annually – ongoing.

Census of Population and Housing

Program Manager

Paul Lowe
Assistant Statistician
Population Census Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 164.0

07/08 19.6

Staff usage 2006/07

721 staff years

References

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

Objectives

The Census program conducts a five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. Its aims are to accurately and efficiently measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census night to provide a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each state and territory. It also provides timely, high quality and relevant five-yearly benchmark data within areas of social concern (for example; population, cultural diversity, work, housing, families, education, labour force) for small geographic areas and for small population groups.

Census data are used extensively by all levels of government for planning, administration, and policy development and monitoring. Population estimates based on the Census are used to determine the number of seats allocated to each state and territory in the House of Representatives and as part of the information set used for the allocation of Australian Government grants to state, territory and local governments.

Community groups use census data to plan for their communities and in applications for government assistance. Businesses use census data for business location purposes and understanding their markets.

Outputs

A number of products have already been released to communicate the outcomes of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. The 2006 output will be finalised with the release of the following products:

Internet based products

- CDATA Online: The CDATA Online product is being developed jointly by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Space-Time Research. CDATA Online combines comprehensive information on Australian society from the 2006 Census, with powerful web mapping application software. Users will be able to create custom tables for a variety of different geographical areas and have the ability to select and combine variables and perform basic tabular manipulation. CDATA online will be released in mid to late 2008.
- Table Builder: This product will allow users to construct their own tables via an interactive web interface, using a database containing the 2006 Census Unit Record File. A range of person, family and dwelling classifications will be available for users to analyse and output will be made available in either tabular, graphical or map based format. Table Builder will be available via the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL) portal and data will be confidentialised. Table Builder will be available early in 2009.

Printed Publications

- "A Picture of the Nation: The Statistician's Report on the 2006 Census" will be released in August 2008 as a compendium flagship publication. This publication will contain commentary and analysis on a range of contemporary topics including; living arrangements, cultural diversity, education and workforce characteristics.

CD ROM products

- The 2006 Census Sample File is a comprehensive Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) containing a 1% random sample of private households, families and associated persons, along with a small random sample of persons in non-private dwellings, available on CD ROM. An expanded 5% sample CURF will be available from the RADL portal from September 2008.

Customised Data Services

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

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

Rural and Regional

Program Manager

Mike McGrath
Regional Director
South Australian Office

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 1.3

07/08 1.3

Staff usage 2006/07

16 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
Regional

Other references

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

National Regional Profile
(cat. no. 1379.0.55.001)

www.abs.gov.au

Under Regional Statistics
select National Regional
Profile

Objectives

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

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

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

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

Demography

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Labour and Demography
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 4.7

07/08 3.6

Staff usage 2006/07

65 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then
Demography

Objectives

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

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

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

Outputs

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

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

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- prepare final small area (Statistical Local Area and Local Government area) and Indigenous population estimates for 30 June 2006 based on the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing - due August 2008
- update demographic assumptions so as to prepare and release the next series of population projections based on the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing - due September 2008
- monitor changes in timeliness of birth registrations and the impact on birth, fertility and population statistics as a result of the legislated requirement (commencing 1 July 2007) to register, or apply for registration of the birth of a child before applying for the Baby Bonus - ongoing through 2008 and 2009
- research and apply indirect demographic methods for compiling updated estimates of the life expectancy including abridged life tables by state/territory for the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population based on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and 2001-2006 death statistics - due November 2008
- monitor estimates produced from improved methods for estimating net overseas migration - annually from March 2009
- prepare and release estimates and projections of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population based on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing - due September 2009
- review demand for, data sources and methods for compiling internal migration statistics for Australia - by July 2010
- investigate data sources and methods for estimating sub-state net overseas migration statistics - by December 2010.

Program Manager

Paul Sullivan
Assistant Statistician
Labour and Demography
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 6.4

07/08 6.5

Staff usage 2006/07

85 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Labour

Objectives

The Labour Statistics program provides information about the structure and performance of the labour market. The program produces statistics on labour supply (such as labour force participation, unemployment, employment conditions and broader measures of labour underutilisation); labour demand (such as employment, job vacancies and labour costs); and industrial relations.

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

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

Outputs

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

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

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

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement reduced sample for the Monthly Population Survey - due July 2008
- develop and conduct the Survey of Contract Work and Labour Hire - due November 2008
- undertake further development of measures of labour underutilisation by producing quarterly series - due August 2008
- implement changes to average weekly earnings statistical series resulting from the revised conceptual framework for statistics of employee remuneration - due February 2009
- implement revised Industry and Occupation classifications (Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification and Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations) in the Labour Force Survey and labour employer surveys, and undertake backcasting - due progressively to March 2011
- implement new population benchmarks for the Labour Force Survey and make historical revisions to series, based on revised population estimates following the 2006 Census - due February 2009
- develop and conduct the Survey of Major Labour Costs - due March 2010.

Program Manager

Sally Goodspeed
Assistant Statistician
Indigenous and Health
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.2

07/08 1.9

Staff usage 2006/07

25 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Health

Under Themes select
People, then Disability,
Ageing and Carers

Objectives

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

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

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

Outputs

Outputs of the program include:

- publications and analytical articles that draw from a range of social surveys and administrative data collections in the areas of health (including causes of death), disability, and carers. Statistical outputs are also available as special tabulations, and through access to Confidentialised Unit Record Files with varying detail released on CD-ROM, the ABS Remote Access Data Laboratory, or for analysis on-site
- information on the health status of the population and associated risk factors is presented in *National Health Survey: Summary of Results* (cat. no. 4364.0) and in electronic snapshots, which focus on particular conditions, risk factors or population groups
- statistics on the level and causes of mortality available annually in *Causes of Death, Australia* (cat. no. 3303.0)
- data on the activities of, and patients treated in, private hospitals (acute, psychiatric and day hospitals) published in *Private Hospitals, Australia* (cat. no. 4390.0)
- information on the nature and extent of disability and associated needs for care and support, as well as the impacts on carers, available in *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings* (cat. no. 4430.0)
- results from the 2007 Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing are also published by the program, providing information about the prevalence and impact of mental health conditions, including use of relevant services.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- publish results from the 2007 Survey of Mental Health and Well being - due August 2008
- publish results from the 2007-08 National Health Survey - due March 2009
- develop and enumerate the 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers - results due September 2010
- develop the 2010-11 National Health Survey - enumeration from mid 2010
- develop and implement a revised output strategy for Causes of Death statistics - due November 2008
- analyse aspects of health and disability using data from a range of sources - ongoing
- provide leadership aimed at harmonising state/territory health surveys that use computer assisted telephone interviews - ongoing
- provide statistical leadership to address data gaps, including through the development of new collections and improving analysis of mortality data - ongoing.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics

Program Manager

Sally Goodspeed
Assistant Statistician
Indigenous and Health
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.3

07/08 3.0

Staff usage 2006/07

36 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Indigenous

Objectives

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

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

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

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

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- publications and other products such as *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey* (cat. no. 4715.0) and *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey* (cat. no. 4714.0)
- publications and other products from the Census of Population and Housing, such as *Population Characteristics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians* (cat. no. 4713.0), and from user funded surveys, such as *Housing and Infrastructure in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities* (cat. no. 4710.0) from the Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey
- statistical research and analysis on a range of Indigenous topics, including biennial compendium reports, in particular *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (cat. no. 4704.0) published jointly with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
- statistical leadership to improve Indigenous statistics on population, mortality, health, housing, community services, education, employment, and law and justice
- provision of subject matter expertise to other areas of the ABS conducting census and survey collections, and analyses of Indigenous data
- coordinating and promoting improvements in Indigenous statistics from administrative collections.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) - results due mid 2009
- commence development of the 2010-11 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS) - from early 2009 for enumeration in 2010-11
- improve, and report on, the quality of Indigenous status information in key administrative sources - ongoing
- continue to strengthen the Indigenous Community Engagement Strategy to build stronger relationships with Indigenous communities by enhancing Indigenous organisation and community awareness and use of available data, and manage provider load on communities - ongoing
- support work on Indigenous statistics in the broader ABS work program including the updating of Indigenous population estimates, projections and life expectancy, using data from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing - ongoing
- support a wide range of clients in accessing and analysing Indigenous statistics from ABS and administrative collections, including for the reports: Review of Government Services; and Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage - ongoing.

Education and Training

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 1.3

07/08 1.5

Staff usage 2006/07

17 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Education
and Training

Objectives

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

Key elements of the program in this field include the conduct of the annual National Schools Statistics collection; the regular conduct of a number of surveys related to education, training and work; and the work of the National Education and Training Statistics Unit. This Unit, in partnership with other government agencies that have responsibility for education and training policies and programs, promotes greater comparability of information across the various education and training sectors.

In addition to these activities, the ABS analyses data and provides feedback and advice to stakeholders on relevant topics and emerging issues through its representation on a wide range of committees and taskforces, and the release of research papers.

The Education and Training Statistics Information Development Plan, *Information Paper: Measuring Learning in Australia - Plan to Improve the Quality, Coverage and Use of Education and Training Statistics* (cat. no. 4231.0), provides a statement of agreement on current priority information needs, and the strategies that the major stakeholders are implementing to address them. The ABS receives advice on emerging issues and priorities in education and training from its main clients and the Education and Training Statistics Advisory Group.

The main clients of the Education and Training Statistics program are: the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs; the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations; state and territory government departments responsible for education and training; the National Centre for Vocational Education Research; academic and research institutions; and education providers.

Outputs

The key outputs of the program are:

- statistics released annually from the National Schools Statistics Collection, and the Survey of Education and Work. Less frequent outputs include: summary publications, and Confidentialised Unit Record Files and datacubes released from regular household surveys such as the Survey of Education and Training, the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, and the Adult Learning Survey
- a statistical information and dissemination service for education and training statistics; the electronic publication *A Directory of Education and Training Statistics* (cat. no. 1136.0); and the maintenance of an education and training statistics theme page on the ABS web site including a biannual newsletter, *Education and Training Matters* (cat. no. 4211.0)
- activities aimed at developing and promoting national classifications and standards for education and training statistics, through the Measuring Learning in Australia series of information papers including the *Information Paper: Measuring Learning in Australia: Dictionary of Standards for Education and Training Statistics, Electronic Delivery* (cat. no. 4232.0.55.001)
- statistical leadership, including engaging with clients through committee representation, an ABS network of state liaison officers, a review of education and training finance statistics; and the publication of occasional research papers such as the *Information Paper: Measuring Learning in Australia: Concepts and Directions in Early Childhood Learning* (cat. no. 4232.0).

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop, conduct and publish results from the Survey of Education and Training - due May 2010
- conduct the annual Survey of Education and Work and publish results - due December each year
- undertake projects for the National Education and Training Statistics Unit Management Board on: quality statistics on early childhood education; the development of a suite of measures of education and training participation, engagement and attainment; development of a matrix to disseminate education and training data from ABS surveys; expanding the National Schools Statistics Collection - ongoing
- enhance education and training finance statistics following the review to be completed June 2008 - due December 2009
- further develop quality indicators of early childhood education - due December 2009.

Crime and Justice

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 1.6

07/08 1.6

Staff usage 2006/07

19 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Crime and
Justice

Objectives

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

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

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

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

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- indicators of the level and nature of recorded crime victimisation in Australia presented annually in *Recorded Crime - Victims, Australia* (cat. no. 4510.0)
- characteristics of defendants, including information on their offences and sentences are available annually in *Criminal Courts, Australia* (cat. no. 4513.0)
- information from the National Prisoner Census on persons held in adult prisons, including their characteristics, sentence lengths and offences for which they are imprisoned published annually in *Prisoners in Australia* (cat. no. 4517.0)
- quarterly *Corrective Services, Australia* (cat. no. 4512.0) presents information on numbers and rates of persons in custody and those serving community-based corrections orders
- outputs from statistical activities to develop and promote national standards for crime and justice statistics including data dictionaries, guidelines and other information.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- finalise development of a Recorded Crime Offender Based collection - due end 2009
- finalise an update of the Australian Standard Offence Classification - due end 2008
- develop the 2008-09 national crime victimisation survey - enumeration from June 2008
- implement a national crime recording standard to improve the quality of national recorded crime statistics - due December 2008
- develop a quality assurance strategy in consultation with police agencies to monitor the quality of the implementation of the national crime recording standard - due December 2009
- promote outputs from 2007 Personal Fraud Survey - ongoing
- in collaboration with data providers, improve the range, quality and availability of data collected through administrative systems in police, courts and corrective services sectors in accordance with the priority actions identified in *Information Paper: National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice (NIDP)* (cat. no. 4520.0) - ongoing.

Culture and Recreation

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 0.7

07/08 0.7

Staff usage 2006/07

10 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Culture and
Recreation

Objectives

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

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

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- develop a conceptual model for defining involvement in arts, cultural heritage, sport and leisure activities to enhance the measurement of varying types of involvement, from paid employment through to leisure participation and volunteering - due June 2009
- following release of the arts and cultural heritage IDP, conduct liaison with external researchers in the field to meet research needs, including the conduct of a research symposium in collaboration with the Cultural Ministers Council Statistics Working Group - due December 2008
- review data needs for sport and physical recreation data, paying particular attention to the collection of high priority sport participation and exercise data. Utilise the recently released discussion paper on *Sport and Exercise; A Conceptual Model* (cat. no. 4149.0) as the basis for development of future collections - due December 2008
- continue with the project to standardise a core set of data elements across cultural heritage institutions. This will culminate in a publication outlining the identified core data elements and best practice methodologies for data collection - due September 2008
- continue to analyse culture and sport data from various ABS household surveys, including: the General Social Survey; Children's Participation in Culture and Leisure Activities; and Work in Selected Culture and Leisure activities - ongoing
- increase standardisation of culture and sport statistical sources by leading the development of relevant standards - ongoing
- improve the dissemination of information through the theme page on the ABS web site, and other appropriate avenues, such as through client networks, conferences, seminars and workshops - ongoing.

Migrants

Program Manager

Ian Crettenden
Assistant Statistician
Education, Crime and
Cultural Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 0.5

07/08 0.5

Staff usage 2006/07

7 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Migrant &
Ethnicity

Objectives

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

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

Outputs

Major program outputs include:

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- establish a new Migrant Statistics Advisory Group to review the major data needs and priorities with respect to migrant and ethnicity related issues - due December 2008
- provide data relevant to Well-being Indicators for Diversity, a set of indicators that are in development to measure outcomes relevant to Australia's cultural diversity and settlement policies - due June 2009
- explore the potential to enhance migrant statistics from administrative data sources - ongoing
- maintain the Migrant Data Matrix to provide users with access to data contained within existing ABS collections that contain migrant and ethnicity related data items (e.g. country of birth, year of arrival, English proficiency) - ongoing
- maintain the Guide to Migrant Statistics, which will provide potential users of migrant and ethnicity related data with summary information about available and relevant data sources - ongoing
- develop further articles for the Perspectives on Migrants publication series - ongoing
- improve the dissemination of information through the theme page on the ABS web site, and other appropriate avenues, such as through client networks, conferences, seminars and workshops - ongoing.

Living Conditions

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.3

07/08 1.9

Staff usage 2006/07

26 staff years

References

Theme page

www.abs.gov.au

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

Under Themes select People, then Housing

Objectives

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

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

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

Outputs

Outputs of the program include:

- information on the economic wellbeing of the population derived from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) and the Survey of Income and Housing (SIH) published in *Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results* (cat. no. 6530.0) and in *Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia* (cat. no. 6523.0)
- additional information provided in *Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia* (cat. no. 4130.0.55.001) and *Household Wealth and Wealth Distribution, Australia* (cat. no. 6554.0)
- data from the HES, Input-Output tables and public sector financial accounts are brought together to estimate the incidence of government benefits and taxes for various population groups - results are published in *Government Benefits, Taxes and Household Income, Australia* (cat. no. 6537.0)
- information about the superannuation of Australians derived from the Survey of Employment Arrangements and Superannuation published in *Superannuation: Coverage and Financial Characteristics, Australia* (cat. no. 6360.0)
- information and analysis about living conditions are also published in a wide variety of omnibus releases, including analysis of the population census as well as survey datasets. Information and analysis about financial stress and financial hardship, derived from surveys, are released both in survey specific products and in omnibus releases.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- publish results from the 2007 Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation - due September 2008
- publish revised household income standards - due December 2008
- publish a framework for the measurement and analysis of low household consumption possibilities - due December 2008
- publish results from the 2007-08 Survey of Income and Housing - due June 2009
- publish an information development plan for housing statistics - due June 2009
- publish housing characteristics results from the 2007-08 Survey of Income and Housing - due September 2009
- publish a framework and standards for statistics on household income, expenditure and wealth - due June 2010
- develop, conduct and publish results from the 2009-10 Household Income and Expenditure Survey - due June 2011.

Program Manager

Bob McColl
Assistant Statistician
Social Conditions
Statistics Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.5

07/08 2.7

Staff usage 2006/07

30 staff years

References

Theme pages

www.abs.gov.au

Under Themes select
People, then Family and
Community Statistics

Under Themes select
People, then Social Capital

Objectives

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

The statistical focus is on outcomes and status within the population, including the demand for and use of services, and monitoring changes over time. Statistics support policy development, program delivery and program evaluation by key government agencies involved in social security, taxation, community and family services, and issues related to older people, children, youth, men and women. They provide information on needs for, and impacts of, programs and service provision, and can be used to assess areas of unmet need.

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

Outputs

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

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

Developments

The main medium term developments are to:

- publish thematic publications from the 2006 Census for both children and youth and older Australians - due December 2008
- publish an analysis of composite measures of social capital items - due December 2008
- monitor and publish progress against the data development actions identified in the Information Development Plan (IDP) for children and youth statistics - ongoing for the life of the IDP, with next update due December 2008
- develop and publish, in consultation with key stakeholders, a family statistics framework to support ongoing data development activities - due June 2009
- publish results from the 2008 Childhood Education and Care Survey - due April 2009
- publish results from the 2009-10 Family Characteristics Survey - due April 2011
- publish results from the 2010 General Social Survey - due June 2011
- finalise development of the next (2011) cycle of the Pregnancy and Employment Transitions Survey - due September 2011 for enumeration in November 2011
- support national and international efforts to develop standard approaches to measuring family and community related data items including family types, unpaid work (and voluntary work in particular) and community strength related indicators - ongoing.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS

Geography

Program Manager

Denis Farrell
First Assistant Statistician
Population and
Environment Statistics
Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 2.2

07/08 2.5

Staff usage 2006/07

24 staff years

Objectives

The Geography program has the following objectives:

- to set, maintain and promote geographic, mapping and Geographic Information System (GIS) standards for the ABS
- to improve ABS' flexibility in spatial statistics by implementing appropriate GIS and geocoding technology for the collection, production and dissemination of such statistics
- to provide geographic analysis, mapping and GIS support services for the ABS
- to develop efficient and user-friendly products for the integration and dissemination of ABS and selected non-ABS spatial statistics.

Outputs

The main outputs of the program are:

- annual maintenance and publication of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) - Electronic Structures (cat. no. 1216.0.15.001), the classification manual Statistical Geography Volume 1 - Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) (cat. no. 1216.0), and digital map boundaries
- development and implementation of a revised statistical geography to replace the ASGC
- concordances for relating statistics to different geographical units
- the ABS Master Spatial Database
- design of geographical areas and mapping to support the execution of the Census
- geographical products to support ABS outputs such as reference maps and topographic databases
- advice and support services to meet the mapping, address coding, GIS, geographical classification and spatial data management needs of the ABS and external clients.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- implement web based mapping system to support geocoding - due July 2008
- review the Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC), develop, publish and implement a new Australian Statistical Geography - due July 2011
- engage with external agencies to promote and support the transition to the new Mesh Block based Australian Statistical Geography - ongoing
- continue to revise and publish the ASGC (cat. no. 1216.0) and associated digital boundaries and concordances - due in July each year until 2011
- revise Mesh Block design based on 2006 Census and changes in population in preparation for the 2011 Census of Population and Housing - publish draft in March 2010
- undertake census workload design and provision of workload maps for Census field operations - due March 2011
- undertake spatial analysis and mapping projects in conjunction with subject matter areas - ongoing
- improve address coding systems, based on working with the Public Sector Mapping Agencies (PSMA) and State land agencies to improve the Geocoded National Address File and also by supplementing this data with internal address information, such as specialised dwellings - ongoing.

Integrated Collection

Program Manager

Ian Brodie-Reed
Assistant Statistician
Integrated Collection
Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

07/08 40.4

References

*Household Surveys
Charter*

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

Objectives

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

- developing a skilled and committed field force
- developing and adopting the world's best practice in data collection
- improving and integrating IC collection business and systems processes
- providing Branch support around data collection cost modelling and workforce capacity planning.

Outputs

The main outputs of Integrated Collection are:

- collection capability for data from administrative sources, and ABS household and business surveys
- advice to subject matter areas on issues related to collection of data from administrative sources, and ABS surveys
- survey frames for ABS surveys
- business survey and administrative data collection instruments
- cleaned unit record files from administrative sources and ABS surveys.

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- improve processes and systems supporting data collection operations identified and progressed, including electronic provision of data - ongoing
- develop, implement and administer the next ABS field Interviewers Certified Agreement - due July 2009
- improve the management of data received electronically, including automatic dispatch and up-loading - due June 2009
- implement agreed provider engagement strategy, including the provision of provider feedback mechanisms - due July 2009
- implement tailored instruments to better meet provider needs, and improve the efficiency of the capture of data from those forms - ongoing
- increase the extent of administrative data acquisition undertaken by the Branch including greater use of corporate facilities - ongoing
- integrate data collection processes across household and business based collections according to agreed Corporate directions - due June 2011.

Data Management and Classifications

Program Manager

Dina Neiger
Assistant Statistician
Data Management and
Classifications Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 5.5

07/08 4.7

Staff usage 2006/07

46 staff years

References

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

Objectives

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

The program seeks to achieve this by:

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

Outputs

Key outputs from the programs cover the following areas:

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

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

Methodology

Program Manager

Geoff Lee
First Assistant Statistician
Methodology and Data
Management Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 11.1
07/08 17.9

Staff usage 2006/07

123 staff years

References

Methodology Research Papers series (cat. no. 1351.0.55.001 and subsequent)

Modellers' Database (cat. no. 1364.0.15.003)

Treasury Model of the Australian Economy – TSP Version (cat. no. 1364.0.15.001)

Objectives

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

The program has specific responsibilities for supporting the statistical collection process. It provides advice on survey design and methods, and on data quality, through all stages of the survey cycle. The program also undertakes research on statistical methods to improve the efficiency and accuracy of ABS work. It undertakes seasonal adjustment, time series analysis (including trend estimation), and a variety of other analytic work to assist the interpretation of socioeconomic indicators.

Outputs

The program's main internal products include specialist support for survey design, estimation and analysis, and practices and standards for design of data collection instruments. The program applies operation research techniques to improve the cost efficiency of ABS collections. It conducts quality reviews of methods and statistical products that contribute to improvements in data quality and to reductions in the load on providers. The program develops methods to protect data confidentiality of microdata files and routine tabular outputs, to improve access to statistical information, whilst ensuring the ABS legislative obligation to preserve confidentiality is met. It also undertakes time series and other analyses that appear in numerous ABS publications. The program supports the development of training courses on mathematical, statistical, analytical and other methodological issues for all ABS staff.

Externally, the Methodology program develops analytical products including new time series, databases and models that measure socioeconomic concepts. The program produces a series of *Research Papers* (cat. no. 1351.0), which present the results of current research or analysis, often of an experimental nature, to encourage discussion and comment.

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are:

- analysis into data linking methodology to support the creation of the Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset - due December 2008
- improved methods for price indexes - due December 2008
- methodology for use of administrative data in analysis applications - due June 2009
- data confrontation methods to enable improved assessments of data quality - due June 2009
- sample and estimation methods for new household surveys and business surveys, and redesign/s of existing collections to improve quality and cost efficiency - due June 2011
- tools and procedures for managing the quality of statistical collections, and training courses to enhance the skills of ABS staff in quality management - due June 2009
- better methods for data collection, and for design and testing of survey instruments - due June 2011
- better cost efficiency of population survey operations and economic data collection by applying operation research techniques - due June 2010
- estimation and imputation methods, which take full advantage of tax data to increase the richness of statistical outputs - due June 2009
- methodology for measuring and managing the statistical consequences of introducing a new industry classification (ANZSIC 2006) and other major scope changes for business surveys - due December 2009
- methods that will expand access to ABS unit record data and detailed tables while still safeguarding the confidentiality of data - due June 2010
- collaborate with universities through partnering in Australian Research Council linkage grants in the area of price index compilation, microsimulation and data modelling - due December 2008
- implement improved time series analysis methodologies for enhancing the coherence and inter reliability of ABS time series outputs - due June 2009.

Customer Services

Program Manager

Kerrie Duff
Assistant Statistician
Customer Services Branch

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 8.6

07/08 9.7

Staff usage 2006/07

97 staff years

Objectives

The Customer Services program supports the ABS mission by assisting business partners to effectively communicate official statistics through a wide range of high quality information products and services and communication channels that are aligned with identified customer needs, so assisting informed decision making.

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

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

The Customer Services program works with ABS business partners to provide many of the services and processes by which statistical releases are prepared. Additionally, the program ensures that the presentation and usability of ABS products are enhanced by the use of relevant standards based on objective research.

Outputs

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

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to:

- continuously improve the ABS website, in particular to improve search facilities, navigation and presentation of data - ongoing from July 2008
- enhance professional dissemination processes and systems used to deliver ABS products and services (such as the Release Management System replacement and Internet Gateway Rearchitecture project) - due December 2008
- review existing publishing services and develop a framework for replacing legacy systems - 2009/10
- review and revise the client servicing framework, including implementing a new client segmentation model and providing client servicing programs - finalise the review and implement outcomes in 2008/09; client servicing programs - ongoing
- improve measurement of the performance of ABS products and service channels and alignment of Key Performance Indicators with corporate objectives - 2008/09
- increase statistical literacy, particularly within the schools sector and to participate in the International Census at School program - 2008/09 and ongoing
- establish infrastructure to support e-publications and e-Metadata visions - e-publications - 2008/09; metadata - 2010/11
- increase automation within publishing systems - incremental changes made each quarter
- improve functionality, usability and increase the audit capability of RADL[™]/ABSDDL - 2008/09
- enhance the capture of client information through telephone enquiry services to support website developments and client service improvements - ongoing.

Technology Services

Program Manager

Jenine Borowik
First Assistant Statistician
Technology Services
Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 57.6

07/08 58.0

Staff usage 2006/07

419 staff years

Objectives

The key objectives for Technology Services Division (TSD) are to:

- ensure reliable, value for money technology services are provided to support the business of the ABS
- enhance working life and productivity of ABS staff through technology
- ensure the security of sensitive data and statistics
- improve professional practices in the ABS through effective practices and knowledge sharing
- enhance ABS statistical capability into the future by leveraging enabling technologies
- continue support for the National Statistical Service (NSS), through strategic collaborations.

Outputs

TSD is an integral part of the ABS. It has three branches, Technology Applications, Technology Infrastructure and Technology Research, which serve the ABS with high quality information and technology leadership, expertise in the application of technology for business outcomes, and support to the organisation in providing an effective statistical service.

TSD supports all major processes for statistical and administrative functions of the ABS, and maintains and develops the underlying technology systems and infrastructure. The main outputs of the program are:

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the program are to support the development or acquisition of systems and infrastructure for core business activities including:

- redevelopment of National Crime & Justice Statistics systems - progressively to 2009
- continue development of macro and micro editing capabilities - progressively to 2010
- continue re-engineering and migration to Economic Statistics 'end-to-end' environment - progressively to 2011
- complete migration to new social statistics metadata framework and infrastructure facilities - progressively to 2009
- replacement of legacy Human Resource and Financial systems - progressively to 2012
- development of research infrastructure for Social Administration Data - progressively to 2009
- development of Standard Business Reporting components, General Ledger and Data Definition Repository - progressively to 2010
- enhance Input-Output system for annual publication of Input-Output tables - progressively to 2011
- improve integrated geo-spatial infrastructure - progressively to 2010
- development of next generation electronic dissemination architecture - progressively to 2011
- continue external National Statistical Service collaborations - ongoing
- continue development of NSS infrastructure - ongoing
- enhance the ABS Web Site and Dissemination systems - ongoing
- improve 'end to end' metadata systems - ongoing
- continue a range of process improvement projects across economic and social statistics programs - ongoing
- remediation and migration of business systems to updated technology platforms - ongoing
- enhance secure network remote access options for staff productivity, emergency preparedness and field data capture - ongoing
- continue development of social on-line survey capability - ongoing

Corporate Services

Program Manager

Janet Murphy
First Assistant Statistician
Corporate Services Division

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 24.2

07/08 25.9

Staff usage 2006/07

176 staff years

Objectives

Corporate Services Division (CSD) provides a range of services to support the ABS and its employees in the achievement of business objectives. Some require direct delivery of services, others involve a support and coordination role. Within an environment of continuous improvement, CSD:

- partners with other areas in the ABS in seeking opportunities to drive productivity improvements
- provides leadership in driving required cultural and behavioural change
- ensures the ABS has a workforce capable of delivering on its work program commitments
- provides comprehensive, timely and cost-effective people, policy, and financial management services, while ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and government directions
- ensures a fair, diverse, safe and healthy work environment for all employees
- provides accurate and timely reporting on the ABS financial and human resource positions
- provides governance and secretariat services to the organisation
- manages/mitigates areas of risk to the organisation through a program of auditing, planning and ongoing reviews
- coordinates the strategic planning framework for the ABS.

Externally, CSD engages with relevant Commonwealth agencies on a wide range of issues relating to its function.

Outputs

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

The main outputs of CSD's program are:

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

Developments

The main medium term developments are to:

- continue the investigation of the renewal of corporate systems, including:
 - an improved integrated planning and budget process - due June 2009
 - improved HR processes - ongoing
 - improved HR and related people processes and services and financial systems - due December 2013
- optimise HR and Financial reporting prior to the renewal of corporate systems - ongoing
- ensure an improved policy and legislation framework is established by December 2008
- develop a strategy for technical assistance to other National Statistical Organisations - due December 2008
- develop and implement a strategy to ensure that the ABS has a sufficient and capable workforce - ongoing from 2008 to 2012
- develop, consult and implement employee framework arrangements that underpin future employment relationships between the ABS and its employees - due December 2009
- support the business outputs of the ABS by ensuring the ongoing development and maintenance of statistical capability, leadership and business skill in the workforce - ongoing.

State and Territory Statistical Services

Resources

Direct costs (\$m)

06/07 8.6

07/08 10.6

Staff usage 2006/07

111 staff years

Objectives

The State and Territory Statistical Services (STSS) program provides a flexible and responsive service to meet the priority statistical needs of state and territory governments and other important state and territory based clients, in addition to those met by the ongoing statistical outputs of the ABS. The STSS project supports the ABS objective of an expanded and improved National Statistical Service (NSS) within each state and territory.

The outcomes expected of the STSS project are:

- strong, collaborative relationships with state and territory governments
- a timely, relevant, and responsive statistical service that meets high priority state and territory needs beyond those that can be satisfied by the ABS national programs
- as a component of the NSS:
 - increased availability of good quality state and territory and regional data from ABS and non-ABS sources that meets high priority state and territory statistical needs, as far as possible within national standards and frameworks
 - informed and increased use of state and territory and regional data from ABS and non-ABS sources
 - improved application of statistical practice and data sharing across agencies within each jurisdiction
- enhanced ABS decisions from the input of state and territory views to ABS program reviews, research, and other specific work program activities.

Outputs

The main outputs of the STSS project are:

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

Developments

The main medium term developments in the project are to:

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

APPENDIX

Appendix

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

National Groups

- Advisory Committee on Australian and International Disability Data
- Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics
- Agriculture Statistics User Forum
- Analytical Community Reference Group
- Australia-New Zealand Population Workshop
- Australian 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
- Biotechnology Statistics User Group
- Business Longitudinal Database External Advisory Group
- Centre of Environment and Energy Statistics Advisory Board
 - Energy Statistics Group
 - Water Statistics User Group
 - Land and Natural Resource Management Statistics User Group
- Childcare and Early Years Learning Survey Reference Group
- Children and Youth Statistics Advisory Group
- Cultural Ministers' Council Statistics Working Group
- Data Mapping Pilot - Early Childhood Working Group and Project Board
- Demography Statistics Advisory Group
- Economic Statistics User Group
- Education and Training Statistics Advisory Group
- Family Statistics Advisory Group
- General Social Survey Reference Group
- Health 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
- Longitudinal Studies Advisory Group
- Methodology Advisory Group
- Migrant Statistics Reference Group
- Migrant Statistics Advisory Group
- Mining User Advisory Group
- National Advisory Group on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Information and Data
- National Ageing Statistics Advisory Group
- National 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 Health Information Group Management Principal Committee
- National Health Information Group Statistical Information 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
- Standard Business Reporting Program Board and Steering Committee
- Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport Research Group
- State Accounts User Group
- Statistical Clearing House User Group
- Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision
- Steering Group for the Crime and Justice Information Development Plan
- Structural Issues in the Workforce Sub-Committee, Workforce Profile Working Group (CDSMAC sub-committee)
- Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers Advisory Group
- Survey of Education and Training Reference Group
- Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing Reference Group
- Time Use Survey Advisory Group
- Transport Statistics Network

State Government Groups

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

