

Household Economic Wellbeing

Key data sources

There are many useful data sources providing information on the economic wellbeing among households in Australia. This fact sheet uses the ABS Data Quality Framework to provide information about the following key data sources (pages 2-3):

- Survey of Income and Housing (SIH)
- Household Expenditure Survey (HES)
- General Social Survey (GSS)
- Census of Population and Housing (Census)
- Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD)
- Australian System of National Accounts (ASNA)
- Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA).

Administrative data can also be used to undertake analyses of wellbeing. Potential opportunities arising from some key datasets are outlined on page 4:

- Australian Taxation Office (ATO) Personal income tax
- ATO Business income tax and Employer Pay as you go (PAYG) payment summaries
- Centrelink and Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) income support payments
- Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS).

Subpopulations

The economic circumstances of some subpopulations are of particular interest to researchers and policymakers as they have been identified as being at greater risk of experiencing economic disadvantage. As well as Census data, there are data sources specific to each subpopulation.

International comparisons - Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)

The LIS is a cross-national data centre consisting of two databases:

- Luxembourg Income Study Database
- Luxembourg Wealth Study Database.

The LIS harmonises micro data to enable international comparisons. Income data is available from 45 countries and wealth data from 12 countries. Registered researchers can apply for remote access to the data for non-commercial purposes.

For more information: <www.lisdatacenter.org>.

A. Migrants

The ABS produces a range of data on the economic wellbeing of migrants. This includes:

- *Migrant Data Matrices* (3415.0) – provide information from a range of ABS data sources including personal and household finances from SIH and HES and wellbeing measures from the GSS. Data are updated annually.
- *Understanding Migrant Outcomes - Enhancing the Value of Census Data, Australia, 2011* (3417.0). Records from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection Settlements Database (SDB) are linked to ABS 2011 Census data. Included are data on employment and income of migrants by migration stream (e.g. Skilled, Family and Humanitarian), whether primary or secondary applicants and whether they had applied onshore or offshore.

B. Disabled people and carers

The *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)* is a cross-sectional survey conducted every three years in both private and non-private dwellings.

Cont'd back page

Key Terms

CAPI/CATI – Computer assisted personal interview or computer assisted telephone interview

Confidentialised unit record file (CURF) – a file containing micro data where the confidentiality of records is preserved using statistical techniques

Cross-National Equivalent File (CNEF) – a file containing equivalently defined variables for panel studies from several different countries

Cross-sectional survey – the sample for the survey is selected at a point in time

Longitudinal survey – the same sample units are revisited for multiple survey periods allowing analyses of individuals over time

Key data sources

Data quality dimension	Survey of Income and Housing (SIH)	Household Expenditure Survey (HES)	General Social Survey (GSS)	Census of Population and Housing (Census)	Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD)	Australian System of National Accounts – Household Sector Accounts (ASNA)	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey (HILDA)
INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT	AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS						MELBOURNE INSTITUTE (funded by Dept of Social Security)
RELEVANCE <i>Main economic wellbeing topics</i>	Income, wealth, housing, labour	Expenditure, income, wealth, financial stress, housing, labour	Income, financial stress, housing and homelessness, labour	Income, housing, labour		Income, consumption, savings and wealth	Income, expenditure and labour (core topics), wealth (on rotation)
<i>Other topics</i>	Child care	Child care, disability	Social inclusion topics e.g. social networks, feelings of safety, transport	Household and family composition, disability, language and culture		Not applicable	Life events and satisfaction, health, family, caring, attitudes, retirement plans
<i>Data collection</i>	Cross-sectional survey (CAPI) of all usual residents 15 years and over		Cross-sectional survey (CAPI) of one usual resident 18 years and over (15 years and over from 2014)	Census of all persons in Australia using self-enumerated paper or electronic questionnaire		Various – business and household survey data; administrative data	Longitudinal survey (CAPI/CATI) of Australian residents 15 years and over
<i>Years available</i>	1994–95 to 1997–98, 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2002–03, 2003–04 then every two years	1984, 1988–89, 1993–94, 1998–99, 2003–04, 2009–10	2002, 2006, 2010	Annually from 1911 to 1954, then 5 yearly from 1961 to 2011	Census 2006 and 2011 linked data	Annually and quarterly from July 1959 for income, consumption and savings; wealth from July 1988	Wave 1 in 2001, then annually for Waves 2 to 12
<i>Scope and populations included</i>	Usual residents of private dwellings excl. very remote areas in Australia (97% of population)			All residents of Australia and Australian territories (excl. Norfolk Island) (100% of population)		All households in Australia incl. non-private dwellings and non-profit institutions serving households	•Australian residents of private dwellings, excl. remote and very remote areas (96% of pop.) [Wave 1] • From Wave 2 incl. remote and very remote
<i>Period of field work</i>	Financial year (July–June)		March - July	Census night (in August)		Financial year	About 18 weeks during August to February
TIMELINESS	Biennial survey, output released about 12 months after reference period	Six yearly survey, output released about 14 months after reference period	Four yearly survey, output released about 14 months after enumeration	Five yearly census, data released in waves (from 10 months after Census night)	Available in late 2013	Preliminary release after reference period – annual (4 months); quarterly (2 months)	Annual survey, output released about 12 months after reference period
ACCURACY <i>Sample size</i>	About 14,600 households	About 9,800 households	Approx. 15,100 households	About 21.5 million people	About 1 million people	Not applicable	9,500 households in Wave 11 (incl. 2,150 from Top-Up sample)
<i>Response rates</i>	About 80%	About 73%	About 88%	About 96%	Not applicable	Not applicable	•Wave 1 response 66% •Attrition rate each wave between 4% and 13%
COHERENCE	Methodological and income definition improvements in 2003–04 and 2007–08		Consistent methodology and definitions	Regular classifications changes managed by producing correspondences between old and new classifications		Complete time series recompiled to new basis whenever treatments change	•Consistent methodology •Income model improved periodically
INTERPRETABILITY <i>Documentation</i>	User Guide (6553.0)	User Guide (6503.0)	User Guide (4159.0.55.002)	•How Australia Takes a Census (2903.0) • 2011 Census dictionary (2901.0) •Census Products and Services (2011.0.55.001)		ASNA Concepts, Sources and Methods (5216.0)	User manual, program library and questionnaires
All User Guides including meta data and copy of questionnaire are available on ABS web site <www.abs.gov.au>, search by catalogue number							www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/doc/
ACCESSIBILITY <i>Summary outputs</i>	•Income incl. detailed tables (6523.0) •Wealth publication (6554.0) •Housing (4130.0)	•Expenditure incl. detailed state and commodity tables (6530.0 [2009–10] and 6535.0.55.001[2003–04]) •Government benefits and taxes (6537.0)	•Publication (4159.0) •State tables (4159.0.55.003 [2010] and 4159.[0...8].55.001 [2006])	Select 'Census' on ABS web site home page, then 'Data and analysis' •QuickStats •Community profiles •TableBuilder •DataPacks •SEIFA •Census Sample Files •SLCD		•Annual publication (5204.0) •Quarterly publications (5206.0,5232.0)	www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/biblio/
<i>Microdata</i>	Confidentialised unit record files (CURFs) available – search 'Microdata' on ABS web site home page			Access via Tablebuilder	ABS charged consultancies only via Tablebuilder	Not applicable	CNEF and unit record data are available www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/data/

Strengths and limitations of key data sources

SIH	HES	Census	ASNA	HILDA
STRENGTHS				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most accurate and representative measure of income and wealth distributions Most comprehensive measures of income incl. imputed rent and social transfers in kind Data collected over a 12 month period allows for seasonal variations Wealth in every cycle since 2003–04 (excl. 2007–08) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captures household consumption expenditure by very detailed commodity Enables joint analysis of income, expenditure, wealth and financial stress Fiscal incidence study undertaken for every HES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage of total population Output available for very fine level spatial analysis, e.g. statistical area 1 Analysis of special populations, e.g. migrants, disabled and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers all economic activity of households Provides per capita and savings estimates Annual and quarterly time series available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longitudinal analysis following circumstances of individuals over time Survey conducted annually Broad range of topics (core or on a rotational basis) Unconfidentialised data available to approved Australian researchers (excl. name and address)
LIMITATIONS				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of income definition and methodological improvements on time series [mitigated by output of income on both current and previous income definitions (see <i>Changes over time</i> fact sheet 5)] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income data affected by methodological improvements (as for SIH) Some expenditure known to be under-reported e.g. alcohol and gambling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal income collected in ranges only Method of calculating household income less accurate as based on ranged personal income data Fully self-enumerated questionnaire may lead to higher levels of data misreporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No household distributional data available across time Household sector includes activity of non-profit institutions serving households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Longitudinal surveys prone to sample and attrition bias over time [Sample weight adjustments and wave 11 general sample Top-Up to mitigate bias] More difficult to ensure sample represents total population than cross-sectional surveys

Key data sources

Subpopulations (cont'd from page 1)

Data are available for 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2009. Includes long-term health conditions and care requirements (including for older people), financial impacts on carers and income.

The latest output is *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Disability and Long Term Health Conditions, 2009* (4433.0). A CURF is also available.

C. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)* is a cross-sectional survey conducted every six years. Data are available for 1994, 2002 and 2008.

Data are collected from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in private dwellings in both remote and non-remote areas, including income and finances, work, housing and mobility and financial stress.

The latest output is *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2008* (4714.0). A CURF is also available.

Integrating administrative data to measure economic wellbeing

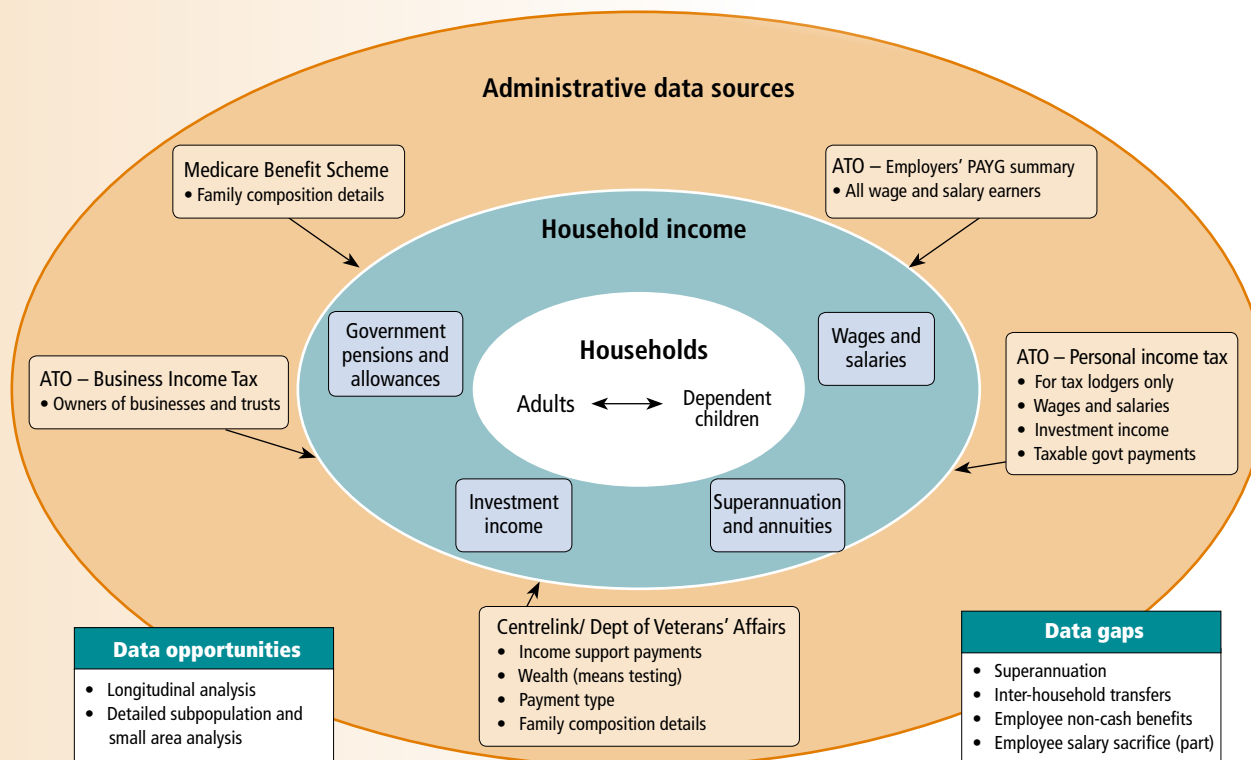
Statistical data integration involves bringing together data from different sources at the unit level (e.g. for an individual person or organisation) or micro level (e.g. information for a small geographic area) to enable analysis of a combined set of information for statistical and research purposes.

Analysis of integrated administrative and other data offers valuable opportunities to investigate more complex and expanded policy and research questions than would be possible using only separate, unlinked data sources. As the data is already collected for an administrative purpose, it can be used without imposing additional burden.

Administrative datasets provide opportunities for both cross-sectional analysis of society, small areas and subpopulations of interest, along with longitudinal analysis of the circumstances of individuals, households or families.

Diagram 1 shows how administrative data sources relate to the concepts of household economic wellbeing.

Diagram 1. Household economic wellbeing measures and relationships based on administrative data



For more information:

- ABS, 2009, *ABS Data Quality Framework*, (cat. no. 1520.0) ABS, Canberra, www.abs.gov.au
- Data integration: see "data integration" on the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au> or "statistical data integration" on the National Statistical Service website <www.nss.gov.au>

To provide feedback on this series please email: living.conditions@abs.gov.au